

Soviets 'not yet ready' for Israel ties

MOSCOW (R) — A Soviet spokesman said Saturday conditions were not yet right for immediate reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Israel although Moscow no longer set any pre-conditions. Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin confirmed at a news conference that Moscow no longer insisted that a Middle East peace conference get under way with Israeli participation before restoration of relations, severed in 1967. Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze first signalled the shift in Soviet policy during a joint news conference in Washington last Wednesday with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. "It is true that there are no pre-conditions, but such an important act must be accompanied by a developing process and Mr. Shevardnadze said so with Prime Minister Shamir," Churkin said. "I am not saying we are ready to restore relations now, but there are no pre-conditions." In his statement in Washington, Shevardnadze said Moscow was moving towards restoring full diplomatic ties with Israel and that completing the process was only a matter of time (Iraq assails Moscow, page 2).

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، والرأي

Volunteers train to defend Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — A new group of Arab volunteers started training in military camps Saturday to defend Iraq in case of war over Kuwait, the Iraqi News Agency reported. The volunteers pledged to "protect the Arab homeland, drive out the American and Zionist invaders... and teach them lessons in sacrifice," INA said. Badreddin Muddathar, an official of the pan-Arab organisation of the Baath Party, told the volunteers the expected battle "will decide all the Arab Nation's battles because it unifies the ranks of the Arab Nation... to face the Zionists and American enemies." The agency did not give the number or nationalities of the volunteers. Earlier groups were mostly Egyptians and Sudanese. Egypt has sent troops to the U.S.-led coalition confronting Iraq over Kuwait but thousands of Egyptians work in Iraq. Some of them served in Iraqi army during the 1980-88 war with Iran. The vice-chairman of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, Izzat Ibrahim, told visiting members of the Libyan-based World Popular Islamic Leadership that "the United States will not, as it claims, settle this battle in a matter of days or weeks. We will fight this war for long years."

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Dutch join march against war

AMSTERDAM (R) — Thousands of people staged a noisy but peaceful march through central Amsterdam Saturday to protest against the military build-up in the Gulf. Protesters waved banners reading "No blood for oil" and "No war in the Gulf" as they made their way from the central Dam Square to the U.S. consulate in the south of the city. A police spokesman estimated the crowd at 3,000. One man was arrested after trying to scale the fence surrounding the consulate, he added. Other protesters carried placards calling on Defence Minister Ruus Ter Beek to recall Dutch warships from the Gulf. The Netherlands has sent two frigates to the area.

Fundamentalists win Mauritania polls

NOUAKCHOTT (AP) — Islamic fundamentalists won 21 of 37 council seats in Nouakchott, the capital and only major city, according to official results Saturday from Mauritania's first multiparty elections. The first round of municipal voting was held Dec. 7, and a second round took place Friday. Official results from smaller communities were not immediately available. In Nouakchott, where an estimated 700,000 of Mauritania's 1.6 million people live, the Choura movement of Islamic fundamentalists won 21 seats on the city council. It was followed by Democracy and Unity, a coalition that encompasses black nationalists and communists, which won 10 seats. A third group, espousing a pan-Arab platform, won three seats. Only 90,000 Nouakchott residents registered for election, but the official turnout figure was not released Saturday.

Hundreds of German spies lurking around, prosecutor says

BONN (AP) — Germany's top lawman believes that 500 to 600 secret agents from former East Germany have yet to be found, a newspaper reported Saturday. In the past several months, authorities have arrested dozens of former East German spies who had been planted in various government offices in former West Germany. But federal prosecutor Alexander von Stahl said he believes up to 600 ex-operatives have managed to elude the united government's spy net, according to an interview published in the Bild am Sonntag newspaper.

Mubarak names new minister

CAIRO (R) — President Hosni Mubarak promoted a junior minister to education minister Saturday to replace Ahmad Fathi Sourour, who was chosen speaker of Egypt's newly elected parliament two days ago. A presidential decree, reported by Egypt's Middle East News Agency, said Adel Ezz would take over the education portfolio but retain his job as minister of state for scientific research.

'Peace boat' sails through Suez Canal

CAIRO (R) — A 'peace boat' carrying 150 women taking medicine and milk powder to Iraq sailed through the Suez Canal Saturday heading for the Gulf, canal sources said. They said the 11,333-ton Iraqi-registered Ibn Khaldoun, which docked off Port Said Friday, entered the canal from the Mediterranean and was on its way to the Red Sea. Egypt's national Middle East News Agency (MENA) said it paid \$50,000 in transit tolls. The ship set out from Tunis a week ago and docked in Libya last Monday before heading for Egypt. The voyage was organised by Arab women's unions with the aim of breaking a United Nations trade embargo on Iraq being enforced by Western warships in the Red Sea and the Gulf. The Ibn Khaldoun is due to stop at Sudanese, Yemeni and Omani ports before heading for Iraq.

King, Arafat discuss Arab dialogue

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat Saturday discussed the latest developments in the Gulf crisis and followed up the question of initiating Arab-Arab dialogue to help settle the issue. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the meeting at the Royal Court, shortly after Arafat's arrival in Amman, was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the King's Political Adviser Adnan Abu Odeh and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem. On the Palestinian side the meeting was attended by Abdul Razzaq Al Yahya, Mahmoud Darwish, Mohammad Milhem, Hakam Bal'awi and Palestine Ambassador to Jordan Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim.

Upon his arrival, Arafat voiced his support for the King's call for Arab-Arab dialogue. The King's call, he said, expressed the views of Iraq, Yemen, Jordan and Palestine.

"Any international solution to

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Arafat honours scholars, page 3

EC calls for Iraqi pullout, urges Mideast conference

ROME (Agencies) — The leaders of the European Community (EC) ended a two-day summit here Saturday with a call on Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait to avert a war in the region. They also reaffirmed their support for an international peace conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The EC leaders also approved \$2.1 billion in emergency aid for the Soviet Union and issued a statement that brought Britain into the movement towards European Union.

The EC leaders approved a resolution calling for an international peace conference on the Middle East "at the appropriate time" and expressing concern about increasing violence in the Israeli-occupied territories.

The leaders repeated their

condemnation of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and said they remained committed to United Nations resolutions calling on Iraq to withdraw.

"The responsibility lies on the Iraqi government to ensure peace for its people by complying fully with the demands of the United Nations Security Council including complete withdrawal from Kuwait by Jan. 15," they said in a statement.

The United Nations has approved the use of force to expel Iraqi forces from the emirate if they are not withdrawn by Jan. 15.

French President Francois Mitterrand said Iraq was risking war with the U.S.-led multinational force in the Gulf by failing to set a date for talks offered by Washington.

"I believe Iraq's position of putting back to a very late date... an exchange of views which could be very profitable is very damaging to peace," he told a news conference.

"If there is no movement, we will reach Jan. 15 and I cannot believe that Iraq is not seriously considering the fate of the world in which it is situated."

British Prime Minister John Major, attending his first summit since replacing Margaret Thatcher last month, said the statement showed the EC was remaining firm on the Gulf.

The EC leaders dealt with the

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Iraqi doctor says children died for lack of medicine

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The director of a Baghdad children's hospital said Saturday four patients had died from lack of proper medicines following the blockade of Iraq.

Dr. Emil Kirma said his 130-bed Alwasi Hospital was operating at half capacity because it was short of medicine, equipment and food.

Kirma said although medicine was excluded from the trade sanctions, the U.S. and British governments were stopping ships carrying medicine from reaching Iraq.

Diplomats say the ban on trade may have delayed some medicine shipments.

The Iraqi government says 1,400 children have died since sanctions were imposed because of shortage of medicine, food and baby milk.

Kirma said his hospital had run out of some types of antibiotics such as cephalosporine and pyopen, insulin, anaesthetic ampoules and many spare parts for equipment.

The supply of disposable syringes was almost gone and doctors were short of many drugs and cutting down on prescriptions.

In an interview with Reuters, Kirma said a boy aged between one and two had died because doctors had to treat septicemia with garamicin instead of pyopen.

A pneumonia sufferer had died because cloxacillin was not available, he said. Doctors had to use ampicillin, which was less effective.

Kirma said two children suffering from acute diarrhoea had died because they needed isomil, a special kind of sensitised milk.

He said the Health Ministry had already supplied his hospital's allocation of medicine till the end of December and no more was available.

"We have a terrible situation," he said. "Children are very ill and need proper antibiotics but we don't have first-line medicine."

Iraq said Friday the United Nations Children's Fund had sent 28 tonnes of medicine. It was the latest of several shipments from humanitarian organisations, foreign governments and other groups.

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society said Saturday it received 25 tonnes of medical supplies from the Italian Red Cross Society.

Dr. Amid Abdul Hamid, deputy chief of the Iraqi society, said the bulk of the supplies delivered by an Italian delegation are medicines for children.

On Saturday the Baghdad Observer, an English-language daily, quoted Nabliah Ibrahim, a children's hospital manager in Baghdad, also as saying that many babies are suffering from malnutrition and a lack of medicine.

He said a lack of potassium and sodium-based medicines threaten the lives of children suffering from diarrhoea.

Abdul Hamid said various Red Cross societies have sent more than 50 tonnes of medicine to Iraq. He did not give a time frame for the deliveries.

Iraq has complained that large shipments of medicine have been held by some countries because of the U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

However, earlier this month diplomats contended Iraq had received at least 70 tonnes of medical supplies since mid-October.



His Majesty King Hussein Saturday confers with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

Israel seals off Gaza; 1,000 reportedly arrested

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli troops sealed off the occupied Gaza Strip Saturday and lawyers said up to 1,000 Palestinians were arrested in the hunt for suspects in the killings of three Israelis at a Tel Aviv factory.

Right-wing Likud member of parliament Yehuda Perah demanded the government allow security forces to shoot Palestinians who carried out such killings, even if they surrendered, Israel Radio said.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, architect of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, said the wave of attacks against Israelis could be stopped only by force.

Eight Israelis have been killed since police shot dead at least 20 Palestinians in Jerusalem Oct. 8.

"No political solution for peace will be achieved even for a day as long as the Arab(s)... feel daily victory by killing Jews," Sharon told army radio.

The Gaza Bar Association said between 600 and 1,000 people, among them many prominent academics, had been detained in a sweep by Israeli forces through the strip.

An army spokeswoman would not comment on the reported arrests but said the strip was a closed military area.

She said curfews had been imposed on five refugee camps, two towns and one district of Gaza City. Curfews were also clamped on three camps in the West Bank. The West Bank towns of Tulkarm and Qalqilya were declared closed military areas.

Sources said troops had sealed off the strip by land and sea. Palestinians in the West Bank said nearly 50 people sympathetic to the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement had been detained there during the night after three Israelis were stabbed to death at a Tel Aviv suburban factory Friday.

Security sources said the arrests were continuing. Police said Palestinians knifed a woman and two men at the factory on Friday morning. Slogans spray-painted on the walls of the plant ascribed the killings to Hamas, a leading force in the three-year-old Palestinian uprising.

In Rafah in the strip, during a march Friday to mark the third

(Continued on page 4)

U.S. church leaders plan peace pilgrimage

NICOSIA (AP) — A delegation of 18 U.S. church leaders said Saturday they were embarking on a "peace pilgrimage" to avert war over the Gulf crisis.

"I think it is true that this is the first time that this kind of effort is being made before a war has begun, to prevent its outbreak," said Edmond L. Browning, the presiding bishop of the U.S. Episcopal Church.

Browning and other delegation members told a news conference they would stress the inter-relationship of the Gulf crisis with other outstanding Middle East problems.

"We are deeply, deeply concerned over the possibility of war and we hope and pray we can participate in the process that can help alleviate this possibility," he added.

"We also feel that for us, as religious leaders, to remain silent, or to choose not to do anything between now and the 15th of January would be abdicating our leadership role as religious people," said Bishop Melvin Talbert of the United Methodist Church.

Jan. 15 is the deadline set by the U.N. Security Council for the use of force if Iraq does not withdraw from Kuwait.

The delegation will split into three groups. One will visit Iraq, another Israel and the third Lebanon and Syria for talks with local church and political leaders.

They will hold a press conference on their return to New York on Dec. 21.

"We don't come with a plan, but we come with the feeling that by actively engaging the situation, just maybe we could help avert war," Talbert said.

"We must negotiate, rather than go to war, this is our bottom line position," said the Rev. Joan Campbell, general secretary-elect of the National Council of the Churches of Christ.

"We will urge (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein and our own president, in every way we can, using the influence that we

(Continued on page 4)

Iraq says Aziz-Bush talks on Dec. 17 are off

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said Saturday that Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz would not meet U.S. President George Bush on Monday as proposed but added it still wanted serious dialogue.

Information Minister Latif Nassif Al Jassem said there was no chance of a Dec. 17 meeting but left open the possibility of a compromise on new dates for the first direct talks between Baghdad and Washington since the Gulf crisis erupted.

But President Saddam Hussein, who demands that any direct talks with Washington address all Middle East issues, said the Palestinian question should be discussed before Iraq's takeover of Kuwait.

He told an Islamic delegation: "If we were told, let us discuss the Gulf issue within the (framework of) international law and then we discuss the Palestinian question, we would tell them if petrol is more important to you, Jerusalem is more important to us and each nation's priority should be respected."

Saddam pledged Iraq would not lightly resort to arms but would fight to defeat whatever armies were massed against it.

"I promise you that we will not think of using arms in an easy way, but if we were forced to fight, we will fight with all the meanings of Arab and Islamic honour... and the unjust people will be defeated whatever the number of their armies and weapons are," he said in a speech reported by Baghdad Television.

Saddam also attacked Syria for the first time since Damascus joined the U.S.-dominated multinational force in the Gulf region.

"...How can the rulers of Syria speak about international legitimacy? Have they respected international legitimacy?"

Aziz was due to fly to Washington this weekend, but Jassem told the British Broadcasting Corporation that there was no possibility of the meeting taking place.

Earlier Saturday, Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) accused Bush of lying

and insisted Iraq will set the date for any direct talks in Baghdad.

"Iraq alone has the right to fix dates for foreign officials to meet its president," the council said in a statement carried by the Iraqi News Agency.

Washington has rejected Jan. 12 as the date of talks in Baghdad between Saddam and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. Baker, saying it was too close to the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

"We have offered 15 dates and (Iraq) ought to get moving," and accept one, Bush said in Washington Friday.

INA said an RCC spokesman accused Bush of lying about proposing 15 dates.

"The American President Bush only proposed two options — either for the meeting to be held on 20, 21 or 22 of Dec. or on Jan. 3, which we said were not appropriate," the spokesman said.

"Those who want peace should not make noises about

(Continued on page 5)

Benjedid and Assad discuss Gulf crisis

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Algerian President Chadli Benjedid opened talks Saturday with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on ways of finding an Arab solution to the Gulf crisis.

Presidential spokesman Jouban Kourieh told Reuters Assad and the Algerian leader held a private meeting at the presidential palace after a session which was attended by their aides.

"The talks dealt with the Arab situation in general and the Gulf crisis and its developments in particular," Kourieh said. He gave no further details.

Benjedid, touring the Middle East to rally support for a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis, arrived in Damascus Saturday from Oman.

He has been to Baghdad for talks with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, visited Jordan and Iran and, according to Egyptian government sources in Cairo, has added Egypt to his schedule.

Saudi Arabia has been cool to his mission and it is unclear whether he will go there as well.

Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are the main Arab participants in the U.S.-led alliance opposing

Algeria opposes both the occupation of Kuwait and the deployment of foreign forces in the Gulf.

In Muscat, Benjedid held talks with Sultan Qaboos, the chairman of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Omani Foreign Minister Youssef Ben Alawi, speaking in Muscat after Benjedid's departure, said that he hoped the Algerian president's tour would enable "Arab leaders to reach a consensus to help the Gulf avert a future catastrophe."

The Algerian leader was still in the stage of exchanging views with his Arab counterparts and "not in the stage of (peace) formulas," Ben Alawi added in statements distributed by the official Oman News Agency.

On Friday, the Omani minister said Benjedid's trip was "very important under the extremely sensitive circumstances."

"It can be said that optimism about the Gulf crisis is now

(Continued on page 4)

Democrats debate war option in Saudi desert

SAUDI ARABIA (AP) — The Senate debate on whether to use force against Iraq after the United Nations' Jan. 15 deadline or give economic sanctions more time to work moved to the desert Saturday when seven Democratic senators toured troop positions.

"Everyone is weighing it very carefully. There are few that prematurely want to take a decision ahead of the president," said Sen. Charles S. Robb of Virginia.

The group, organised by Senate majority leader George Mitchell of Maine, was scheduled to meet King Fahd later Saturday in the Red Sea port of Jeddah. It included senators Paul Simon of Illinois, Robert Graham of Florida, Richard Shelby of Alabama, Richard Bryan of Nevada and Herbert Kohl of Wisconsin.

Their tour is also to include stops in Cairo Sunday and Monday, when they are to meet President Hosni Mubarak, as well as a visit to Israel Tuesday for talks with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

While opinion among the Democrats on the wisdom of using force varied, the general consensus was that the situation had moved closer to war this week as the United States and Iraq deadlocked over a date for U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to visit Baghdad to meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. They also supported Bush's tough talk against Iraq.

"My sense is that the prospects of war are greater than they were two weeks ago in large part because of the way in which (Iraq) is using the meeting as a form of manipulation rather than serious discussion," said Graham.

Simon, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, came out more strongly against the war option if Iraq ignored the United Nations deadline of Jan. 15 to withdraw from Kuwait or face war.

"The question is do you pursue sanctions with troop rotations or do you move militarily. My own inclination would be to have sanctions with rotations," said Simon, who added that it might mean delaying the fight for a year or more.

But others said sanctions might not have the desired effect.

"Though clearly sanctions are working in an economic sense, they may not convince Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait no matter what time frame is involved," said Robb, also on the Foreign Relations Committee.

Morocco says 2 killed, 200 injured in riots

RABAT (Agencies) — Police clashed with protesters and looters armed with chains and bars in Fez and other cities during a general strike. Two people were killed and about 200 injured, authorities said Saturday.

Both deaths occurred in Fez, the scene of the worst violence during Friday's one-day strike. A policeman was fatally stabbed and a man was crushed to death by stampeding protesters during a police charge, according to an official communiqué.

Union officials said more than 25 people were killed, but the claim could not be confirmed. Fez and other cities were reported calm Saturday.

The union officials, who were seeking higher wages, said 80 per cent of workers observed their strike call. The government had discouraged the strike with a banning order, and it appeared mainly to have affected Fez.

The government said only about 50 of the country's 10,000 businesses and factories were idled by the strike.

The national news agency, MAP, said gangs of looters armed with chains and iron bars ransacked stores, banks and public buildings in Fez, the country's religious capital.

Friday's strike was called by Morocco's two trade union federations, the Confederation Democratique du Travail (CDT) and the Union Generale des Tra-

vailleurs Marocains (UGTM), to back a list of demands including doubling the legal minimum wage.

Witnesses said most of the rioters were aged from 15 to 25. Many were from Fez University, scene of recent clashes between left-wing and Islamic fundamentalist students.

It was the worst street violence in Morocco since January 1984, when more than 100 people died in bread riots.

MAP said several hotels in Fez, 150 kilometres east of Rabat, were set ablaze but there were no casualties among staff or guests. Rescue teams plucked some from the flames.

One hotel, the Merinides, a 200-room landmark on a hill overlooking the old city, was burned down.

A member of the West German parliament on holiday with his wife said they spent eight hours hiding in their room while rioters looted and burned the Merinides.

"It was a nightmare. It was hell. We hid in our room while the mob wrecked the hotel and stole everything," said Christian Lemmer, a Christian Democrat.

He said someone broke down the door of their room Friday afternoon and they escaped down a smoke-filled corridor to take refuge in another room with two Spanish honeymoon couples.

U.N. president to visit refugee camps, emphasises need for peace conference

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The General Assembly president has followed up a call for sanctions against Israel with the announcement that he would visit Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan and the Israeli-occupied territories early next month.

It would be the first time the president of the General Assembly had visited the camps. U.N. officials said.

General Assembly President Guido de Marco, addressing a news conference before the end of the assembly next week, also said that an international peace conference on the Middle East "should become a reality."

De Marco, the foreign minister of Malta, spoke one day after the 159-member assembly voted overwhelmingly to call for sanctions against Israel for occupation of Arab territories. It also called, as in previous years, for an international peace conference.

General Assembly resolutions, however, are not legally binding. But they carry moral weight as the expression of the will of the international community, especially in the post-cold war era when the United States and the Soviet Union are cooperating on many issues.

Security Council resolutions are considered legally binding, and the United States recently

has been trying to remove any reference to a Middle East peace conference from the heart of a resolution providing more protection for the Palestinians. U.S. officials say that Iraq might misinterpret a call for a Middle East peace conference as linkage to its invasion of Kuwait.

The United States and non-aligned members of the council apparently are at an impasse over U.S. efforts to remove the passage on the conference, although it mirrors U.S. policy about an eventual meeting. Negotiations are continuing, however, and the council is to meet again Monday.

Some Arab members have indicated that if the stalemate persists in the council they would try to raise the issue in the General Assembly and seek endorsement from all members on protecting Palestinians and calling for a peace conference.

De Marco indicated that he did not want to see any contradiction between the assembly and the council and hoped that the issue would be resolved, without recourse to the assembly.

At his news conference Friday, de Marco said he would visit Palestinian refugee camps in an effort to highlight the plight of refugees living in the occupied territories.

"We must give the human

problem more political importance than it has had so far," de Marco said.

His itinerary was not disclosed, but the trip was expected to take place in the first week of January, officials said. He also is likely to hold official meetings in Israel and in Jordan during the visit, officials said.

De Marco also said that "a peace conference should become a reality."

The president, in line with other U.N. formulations, said that a Middle East peace conference should include all interested parties, including Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Its purpose, he said, would be "to ensure that the occupied territories are no longer occupied, but are returned to those from whom they were taken."

He said it also should provide international guarantees for secure frontiers for Israel and other states.

He said that a conference should not preclude bilateral negotiations between Israel and its neighbours.

Israeli officials have rejected a peace conference, saying that the primary vehicle for peace should be bilateral negotiations with its neighbours. They have said Israel would refuse to accept a settlement imposed upon it and would not negotiate with the PLO.

Iraq criticises Moscow's move towards full relations with Israel

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — A government newspaper said Saturday that the Soviet Union had capitulated and had sold out its Arab friends by moving towards full diplomatic relations with Israel.

The Baghdad Observer, a government owned English-language daily, linked the move to Moscow's opposition to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Soviet support for the international sanctions against Iraq.

"The Soviet Union's backing down from its international obligations cannot be described but as a sell out of its Arab friends which is also vividly clear in its handling of the Gulf crisis," the newspaper said in an editorial.

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze met Wednesday with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Washington and said later the two countries were moving towards restoring full ties. The Soviet Union severed relations with Israel in 1967.

Shevardnadze also said resumption of full ties no longer depends on any Soviet preconditions, such as Israeli participation in a Middle East peace

conference.

The Baghdad Observer said the Soviet Union has been considered an Arab friend and the main supporter of the Third World, but that now it seems to have dropped "all its declared policies because of Western and Zionist pressure."

Iraqi media have been critical of the Soviet Union recently because of its denunciation of the Kuwait invasion. Iraq media also have accused Moscow of being subservient to the United States in the Gulf crisis.

"It's regrettable that a country friendly to Arabs is giving up such a friendship and turning its back to the mutual interests of both Arabs and the Soviets," the Observer said.

In Ankara, Shevardnadze warned Friday that a Gulf war would be costly and asked for all means to be used for a peaceful solution.

"I have knowledge of the military potential in the region," he told reporters at the end of a two-day visit to Turkey. "Therefore I can imagine the dimensions of the catastrophe that will take place."

"I even try to refrain from

uttering the word war," Shevardnadze said.

He said he still had hope that the Iraqi leadership would withdraw from Kuwait. Shevardnadze said he also hoped that the meeting of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein would have a good result.

He urged that a date for the meeting be set and the talks take place as soon as possible.

In a news conference before his departure for Moscow, Shevardnadze said it was important to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem once the Gulf crisis is ended.

The Soviet Union Wednesday asked for the postponement of a U.N. resolution endorsing a Middle East peace conference until after Shevardnadze meets with Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

There were news reports that the Soviet minister and Arafat would meet in Ankara but Turkey did not want it, apparently for fear that it would overshadow their own meetings with Shevardnadze on expanding bilateral ties.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Five wounded in attacks

BEIRUT (R) — Gunmen attacked three Beirut offices of the right-wing Falange Party at dawn on Saturday, wounding five people, security sources said. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks, carried out with rocket-propelled grenades. In the Christian districts of Tabouha, Jdeideh and Ain Remmaneh, Falange-run radios have accused rival pro-Syrian Christian militiamen of being responsible for several similar attacks since the Lebanese army took control of a militia-free Beirut 12 days ago. The Falange was evicted from areas then controlled by rebel army, General Michel Aoun when he started a war against the party's ally, the Lebanese Forces (LF) militia, in January. Aoun was toppled on Oct. 13 after Syrian aircraft bombed his bunker in east Beirut. The Falange returned in November under a plan to reunite the Lebanese capital and took over their former offices.

Velayati's visit to Moscow postponed

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet and Iranian authorities have postponed a visit to Moscow this weekend by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Saturday. Spokesman Vitaly Churkin said the visit had been put off because of diplomatic commitments on both sides. No new date was set, Churkin said the two sides were in close contact on major issues, including the Gulf crisis.

Canada abstains on Cyprus vote

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Canada called Friday for mandatory assessment of peacekeeping fees for Cyprus, instead of voluntary contributions, noting that Canada is \$11 million in the red. The nation is one of nine contributing men and material to the peace force, which has been supervising a truce between Turkish forces that seized the northern third of the island from Greek Cypriots in 1974. A vote on the dues issue is expected sometime next week. The Security Council Friday routinely extended a six-month mandate for the peacekeeping force, and Canada used the opportunity to plead its cause. "Canada is owed \$11 million for Cyprus, we think it's time we had a fair system," said the Canadian representative Philippe Kirsch after leaving council chambers. But he said Canada was making no threat to withdraw its forces.

CIA says war would be bloody and long

WASHINGTON (R) — The director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) said a war with Iraq would be long and bloody, the Washington Post reported Saturday. "I don't believe the military assessments contemplate a quick buckle," CIA chief William Webster told the Post in an interview. He said Iraqi forces were positioned for a tough, defensive land operation. He said much would depend on the effectiveness of a U.S. air assault, "but we know they're pretty well dug in and shielded." Webster said Iraq's strategy "is to defend Kuwait... with maximum intensity and to try to draw us into the desert where we can inflict an unacceptable number of casualties." Iraq would not withdraw from Kuwait until it was convinced it was in peril of imminent attack, he said, possibly by staging a partial pullout. The danger is that Iraq would believe it could succeed "until the first shell is lobbed over it," Webster said. The CIA director said Iraqi military forces had a stockpile of 1,000 tonnes of deadly chemical agents, loaded in almost every type of weapon.

Two ships damaged in Bosphorus collision

ANKARA (R) — Two cargo ships collided in the Bosphorus strait, causing damage but no casualties, the Anatolian news agency said on Saturday. It quoted Istanbul naval police as saying the Ince-1, a 5,000-tonne Turkish-flagged dry cargo ship, was in collision with Souad, a 1,000-tonne dry cargo ship under the Lebanese flag, Friday night. Both vessels suffered minor damage and anchored off the Alirakpi shore of the Bosphorus after the accident, the agency said.

Germany urged to take Jews

BERLIN (AP) — A Jewish community leader in Berlin urged the government Friday to allow Soviet Jews to come to Germany without restrictions. Moishe Waks said in an interview with the Berlin radio station Rias that on moral grounds the Bonn government must assure the sojourn of Soviet Jews in Germany. Earlier this fall, the government said it would no longer accept new visa applications for Soviet Jews who wanted to emigrate to Germany. Waks claimed that the worsening economic conditions in the Soviet Union was causing a rise in nationalist sentiments that are often directed against Jews. He spoke out against contingency plans that would create quotas for the number of Soviet Jews who could come to Germany. Waks said that an eventual quota ruling would not make sense since in the future all Soviet Jews would be able to leave the country when new passport rules take effect that eliminate travel restrictions for Soviet citizens.

Most Britons back action against Iraq

LONDON (R) — Nearly three out of four people in Britain support military action against Iraq if sanctions fail, according to an opinion survey released Saturday. A Harris poll for the British Broadcasting Corporation showed 57 per cent of those questioned expected sanctions would not work. The poll showed 71 per cent of the 1,091 people interviewed nationwide on Dec. 12 and 13 favoured military action if United Nations sanctions did not force Iraq to leave Kuwait. Britain has contributed ground troops, planes and ships to the U.S.-dominated multinational force in the Gulf.

Iran stages major war exercises

NICOSIA (AP) — As Iran's armed forces carried out the largest manoeuvres ever held by the nation, spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei Saturday ordered the navy to remain united and prepared to confront any eventuality in the Gulf.

Tehran Radio said Khamenei was addressing high-ranking military officers taking part in the air-sea exercise, code-named "Pirozi 1," or Victory 1.

The manoeuvres reportedly began Wednesday, but were not mentioned in the Iranian media until Saturday.

The radio said the destroyer

rebuilt destroyer will be taking part in the war-games, the radio said.

It did not provide details of the manoeuvres.

But the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), also monitored in Nicosia, said last month that the 10-day exercises will cover 30,000 square kilometres in the Gulf and the Gulf of Oman and involve 50 warships.

Several helicopters and hundreds of speedboats will also take part in the exercises, IRNA said.

IRNA said the manoeuvres would include amphibious operations and landings, rescue of "captured" ships and underwater rescue of frogmen.

Weapons to be used would include surface-to-surface mis-

siles and air-to-surface missiles, anti-submarine and surface-to-air "bombs," IRNA reported in November.

The location of the manoeuvres, near Iran's southern islands, presents no conflict with the dozens of ships that are part of the multinational force enforcing U.S. sanctions against Iraq.

Referring to the U.S.-led force, which Iran opposes, Khamenei said that "the enemy forces are armed to the teeth," and cautioned Iranian forces to maintain unity.

The dominant Islamic Republic Guards Corps, which has its own air, military and naval wings, and Iran's regular armed forces, have often been involved in infighting among themselves.

Iraqis urged to prepare for war as U.N. deadline nears

BAGHDAD (AP) — A month before the U.N. Security Council's deadline to withdraw from Kuwait, Iraq has accelerated a drive to prepare its population for war with U.S.-led forces.

Bomb shelters are being built, civil defence and first-aid training sessions held, and plans are being readied to evacuate major population centres.

The government-controlled media has been publicising the need to be prepared for any eventuality and urging people not to panic during air raids.

Posters pinned on walls at street corners in Baghdad and other cities ask people to be prepared to face even chemical and nuclear weapons.

"Don't panic at the time of an air raid. Just be calm and ask for help from local civil defence men," reads one poster in a main plaza of Baghdad, which has a population of around one million.

There has been a noticeable change in such preparations since Nov. 29 when the Security Council passed the U.S.-sponsored resolution authorising military force against Iraq if it does not leave Kuwait by Jan. 15.

President Saddam Hussein and other leaders have rejected the call.

"We want peace... and are endeavouring to achieve it and work to reach a point where none of us brandishes his sword against the other. But if our enemies want to push affairs to a military duel, then with God's help we will win and walk over their corpses and tread on their heads," Saddam said Thursday.

"If war breaks out, it will be the most ferocious war that

ever took place, so we have to make our people aware of that," a senior Iraqi official said in an interview.

Many Iraqis believe the United States might launch an offensive aimed at retaking Kuwait after the Security Council deadline and fear that targets in Iraq itself could be hit.

They believe that casualties could be high if the multinational forces confronting Iraq uses its formidable air power — an estimated by 1,900 aircraft by mid-January — to knock out airbases, military factories and economic targets. Many of these are close to population centres.

The Iraqis endured eight years of war with Iran. The government has never released casualty figures, but unofficial estimates range from

100,000 to 200,000 killed.

Baghdad and other cities came under missile attack during the 1980-88 war and many people believe they should be prepared to meet the threat of a potentially more devastating conflict with the United States and its allies.

"The Iraqi army and people must resist this imposition by the United States and its allies, whether in the battlefield down in Kuwait or here in our cities and towns," said Shawkat Ibrahim, a retired government employee.

The 55-year-old Ibrahim, who lives in a Baghdad suburb, said he has joined a civil defence course.

Like other Iraqis, he said he believes war is inevitable if a settlement to the crisis is not found soon.

The government has

ordered owners of multi-storey buildings to comply with regulations requiring shelters in their basements.

The shelters must be marked with 10-centimetre square signs advertising their presence. Fines or jail terms are possible for those who fail to do so.

On Friday, the ruling Baath Party organ, Al Thawra, urged Iraqis to join civil defence courses and learn first aid and fire-fighting as a "national duty to foil the American aggression."

"Our militant country is facing a great challenge represented by the American-Zionist aggression, and in order to achieve victory every one of us should have a contribution to make it whether by holding a gun on the battlefield or by comatting the

effects of the aggression against other facilities," the paper said in a front-page editorial.

"We cannot achieve victory without knowing how to behave during aggression. This is why we should join civil defence courses," it said.

Officials also said drills to evacuate major population centres have been conducted, while similar drills are planned in Baghdad Jan. 15, the deadline date.

The exercises are aimed at moving the population to safe havens in other areas believed not to be targets for air attacks.

Al Thawra said the civil defence courses were organised in villages around the country, with Iraqis being instructed by party cadres and labour unions on how to fight fires and treat casualties.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE
15:00 Telnet
15:30 Koran
15:45 Programme review
16:00 Children programme
17:10 Football
18:00 News summary
18:10 Local programme
19:00 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Programme review
21:45 Local programme
22:00 News summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Le Lyonnais
19:00 News in French
19:15 Classical music
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 Varieties programme
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Open House
21:10 Doc "Great Journey"
22:00 News in English
22:30 The Magistrate

PRAYER TIMES

06:01 Fajr
06:24 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:31 Dhuhr
14:15 Asr
16:26 Maghreb
18:31 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swaidah, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771351
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 653528
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 611295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817 and 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be fair and some clouds are expected to appear at different altitudes in the afternoon. Wind will be light and variable changing at times to easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds

will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Min-max temp.
Amman 3-19
Aqaba 12-22
Desert 3-20
Jordan Valley 8-23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 26 per cent, Aqaba 43 per cent.

USEFUL NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hussein Haddad 731267
Dr. Amjad Nayman 781905
Dr. Hisham Abu Argab 891122
Dr. Ahmad Al Nakour 625934
First pharmacy 622520
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nabulrah pharmacy 626672
Al Salem pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 646945
Shamekani pharmacy 637660

will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Min-max temp.
Amman 3-19
Aqaba 12-22
Desert 3-20
Jordan Valley 8-23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 26 per cent, Aqaba 43 per cent.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630241
Rescue 199
Fire Brigade 691228
Blood Bank 773121
Highway Police 864002
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hosd Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 770147
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 767111
Complaints 767111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 610230
Central Amman Telephone

will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Min-max temp.
Amman 3-19
Aqaba 12-22
Desert 3-20
Jordan Valley 8-23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 26 per cent, Aqaba 43 per cent.

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 642281/6
Al-Balad Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Molles, J. Amman 664114
Palestine, Shamsi 636140
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845843
Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672270
The Islamic Abdal 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdal 6641646
Izzat, Al-Mutajir 770147
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army, Marla 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 66224090
Arenal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)963223

will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Min-max temp.
Amman 3-19
Aqaba 12-22
Desert 3-20
Jordan Valley 8-23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 26 per cent, Aqaba 43 per cent.

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.
ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
09:45 Doha (RJ)
10:00 Jeddah (RJ)
10:30 Cairo (RJ)
10:45 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
10:55 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)
11:00 Jeddah, Sanaa (RJ)
11:45 Cairo (RJ)
12:00 Paris, Rome (RJ)
12:45 Madrid (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
11:15 Istanbul (RJ)
11:45 Brussels, Geneva (RJ)
11:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Sls per kg
Apples 550 / 450
Bananas 500 / 400
Sausages (Mikamust) 450 / 400
Beans 320 / 280
Cabbage 50 / 30
Carrot 150 / 140
Cauliflower 120 / 80
Corn 200 / 150
Cucumbers (large) 150 / 100
Cucumbers (small) 300 / 200
Dates 170 / 120
Eggplant 1400 / 1000
Garlic 550 / 450
Lemon 200 / 150
Mallow 120 / 100
Marrow (large) 120 / 100
Marrow (small) 240 / 180
Onion (dry) 200 / 150
Onion (green) 220 / 180
Okra 600 / 500
Orange 340 / 280
Pepper (hot) 200 / 180
Pepper (sweet) 120 / 80
Potato 320 / 250
Radish 150 / 100
Sage 650 / 500
Spinach 180 / 120
Tomatoes 230 / 170

Jurists urge clergy delegation to 'double efforts' for peace

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation representing the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States is due here Sunday en route to Iraq where they will meet with government leaders to discuss the Gulf crisis.

"The 13-member delegation is going to Iraq in a show of support for efforts to settle the Gulf crisis by peaceful means and to explain the churches' views with regard to the Palestine and Lebanese questions," said a statement by the Middle East Council of Churches here Saturday.

The delegation going to Iraq is one of three delegations conducting similar missions, one in Palestine and the others in Syria and Lebanon, said the statement.

While in Amman, the delegation will meet with Jordanian government officials and will take part in a special Sunday mass for peace which is going to be organised by the Greek Orthodox church in Abdali.

The head of the delegation, Bishop Edmund Browning, met with President Bush before coming out for his mission here, and informed the president about the churches' views which oppose the use of force to settle the crisis in the Gulf, according to the statement.

On the eve of the delegation's arrival here, the Jordanian Jurists Association in Amman Saturday released a statement, addressed to Bishop Edmund Browning, urging him to double his efforts for the establishment of peace in the Gulf and the Holy Land.

Following is the text of the message addressed to the bishop:

The Jordanian jurists, in consequence of the Zionist occupation of the Holy City Jerusalem, wish to draw your attention to the news received from their colleagues in Jerusalem which has been corroborated by the provocative statement made by Aershon Solomon, on Dec. 11, 1990 leader of the so called

"Temple Mount Faithful," against the Haram Al Sharif, Islam's most sacred shrine.

They are planning to make an incursion into the Muslim holy shrine and to establish an encampment on its premises Monday Dec. 17, 1990, to coincide with the upcoming Jewish feast.

Solomon added in his statement that he intended to teach the Palestinians a lesson and that the people of Israel will not submit before stones nor any other actions imposed by the Palestinians to prevent his movement's unlawful incursion.

Jordanian jurists in conveying this message to Your Holiness wish to alert all minds to the dangers inherent in the plans of the fanatical Jewish movement, particularly in the massacre of Muslim worshippers on Oct. 8 by Israeli security forces under the pretext of defending Jewish worshippers.

Your Holiness is intending to visit Baghdad bearing a message of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S. on the Gulf and the Middle East crisis adopted November 15, 1990.

We, in Jordan, Iraq and in all the Arab countries, Christians and Muslims alike, are good believers in God and Jesus Christ; but as you know the strategic ally of the U.S., the Zionists in occupied Palestine, do not believe in Christ. They say and declare that he is the false Christ.

You are going to Baghdad to ask Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait.

Please look at the Arab history of the region and the geographical facts and see if it agrees with the Iraqi actions.

Please do something in your holy churches, urge the implementation of all resolutions of the United Nations Security Council related to Palestine and the Palestinians.

Please be informed that people in Iraq and Saddam Hussein are lovers of peace, freedom, and justice.

Deputy calls for peace march as war deterrent

AMMAN (J.T.) — A member of the Lower House of Parliament Saturday called for a people's march to the Iraqi-Saudi-Kuwaiti common border in a bid to prevent the outbreak of war; another deputy underlined the importance of efforts by Parliament to seek support for His Majesty King Hussein's call on the Arabs to embark on a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis.

Issa Reimouni Al Abed, from the constituency of Jerash, north of Amman, suggested at a press conference that large numbers of people representing Arab and Islamic communities and professional and political sectors from the Arab World should stage a peace march from the Jordanian-Iraqi border towards the Iraqi-Saudi-Kuwaiti border by Jan. 13, 1991 to serve as a human shield preventing the eruption of a war in the Gulf region.

He said heads of Muslim and Christian faiths should spearhead the march carrying copies of the Koran and the Bible, and added that popular delegations should tour capitals of the world advocating peace and calling for peace loving people to join the march of peace in the Gulf.

Reimouni called for an hour-long stoppage throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds on Jan. 2 and a general strike on Jan. 12 in support of the Arab and Islamic world's rejection of a resolution by the U.N. Security Council authorising the use of military force against Iraq if it fails to

withdraw from Kuwait by Jan. 15.

Jan. 12 should be declared a world-peace day, Reimouni suggested at a press conference held in his office in Amman.

Reimouni appealed to various economic, trade, political, professional and religious groups from around the world to respond favourably to his call and ensure the success of his peace bid; he appealed to local political parties to help organise the march.

Taher Al Masri, from Amman constituency, said that Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, which he chairs, had been discussing means of promoting King Hussein's advocating Arab-Arab dialogue.

"The committee will submit a report to the full House at its next meeting, outlining the importance of dispatching parliamentary delegations to tour a number of Arab, Islamic and friendly nations to support the King's call," Masri said.

The committee, he said, Saturday discussed reports about an attempt by an extremist Jewish group planning to storm Al Haram Al Sharif Monday in defiance of the Islamic Nation, and reviewed measures that are being taken worldwide to abort such a move.

He said that the committee would pursue efforts, at regional and international levels, to prevent the occurrence of massacres at Christian or Muslim shrines like the one that occurred last October.



QUEEN INAUGURATES EXHIBITION: Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein opened at the Intercontinental Hotel in Amman Saturday an exhibition of small size projects organised by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NEF). The six-day exhibition displays jewellery, embroideries, tricot, children's wear, artificial flowers, ceramics

and traditional handicrafts. A total of 28 groups are taking part in the exhibition which is designed to encourage housewives to embark on productive work and to promote local handicrafts. The Queen later attended a music concert presented by the children of the National Music Conservatory.

KLM to stop Jordan flights

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Dutch airlines KLM announced Saturday that it would stop its flights to and from Amman as of the coming month, becoming the third foreign airline to do so this year.

British Airways (BA) ended its flights in March and announced that Royal Jordanian (RJ) would be acting on its behalf; Swissair ended operations completely by Nov. 30, 1990.

BA said, upon announcing that it stopped flying to Amman, that the move was taken due to poor business. Under the agreement with the Jordanian airline, RJ act on behalf of British Airways on the Amman-London route, transporting passengers on behalf of the British carrier and will also maintain and service BA TriStar aircraft at its hangars located at the Queen Alia International Airport.

No similar deal was announced between RJ and Swissair which used to operate bi-weekly flights between Zurich and Amman.

In announcing its end of operations KLM said that the decision was temporary and prompted by economic losses incurred

by the Dutch Airline.

KLM's statement said: Due to the Gulf crisis and other adverse economic developments such as loss in value of U.S. dollar, fuel cost increases, additional insurance fees etc. KLM regrets to announce that it expects a serious loss in the current financial year. Therefore the board of KLM is looking for cost reductions wherever possible.

One of the decisions made is to suspend temporarily services to almost 10 destinations in Europe and the Middle East.

Regrettably Amman will therefore lose KLM's weekly flight temporarily due to the adverse economic circumstances.

The above sad news was conveyed by KLM's Vice President and Area Manager for the Middle East Bram Steller and General Manager for KLM Jordan Najeb Fakhoury to the relevant authorities.

They made it a point to give the full background of this decision to both Director General of Civil Aviation Authority Mahmoud Jamal Balqaz and to President/Chief Executive Officer of Royal Jordanian Husam Abu Ghazaleh.

Izzeddin urges efforts to solve region's issues

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Information Ibrahim Izzeddin said Saturday it became necessary to concentrate on the real problems of the region. He said more extensive efforts should be made to solve these problems in the light of the changes in Europe and the Soviet Union and the change in the world order.

In an interview with the American NBC network Izzeddin said there had been an international commitment to resolve the Palestinian problem and there was an interest in solving all the region's problems.

He said moves by Jordan and other Arab countries to find a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis aim at preventing a devastating catastrophe in this part of the world and to enhance the region's stability. "To reach that end, a negotiable settlement to the crisis, that satisfies all parties to the conflict, should be reached," he said.

In answering a question on whether linking the Palestine question and the Gulf crisis blocks the way to finding a solution to the Gulf crisis and delays discussing the Palestinian issue, Izzeddin said that the two issues "complement" each other. "I think there could be some sort of combination that could satisfy everyone. I think there could be a combination by which we can concentrate on solving the Middle East crisis and at the same time concentrate on the Gulf crisis. I can't see contradiction. I can't see any way that one can put those two issues in contradiction to each other. On the contrary, the two issues complement each other and they could in one way or another place us in a better position as a nation and place us in a better condition as a region."

Jordan, Yemen to boost trade ties

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday announced its endorsement of the minutes of the Jordanian Yemeni Joint Economic Committee meeting which was held in Sanaa between Nov. 26 and 28.

The minutes, signed then by Minister of Industry and Trade Ziyad Fariz and Yemen's Minister of Supply and Trade Fadel Abdullah, outlined means to promote economic and trade ties between Jordan and Yemen, according to an official statement Saturday.

It said that the two sides had agreed on speeding up measures to issue import and export licences for dealing with Yemeni and Jordanian national products, provided that Yemen's imports of Jordanian goods be conducted within a quota set by the Yemeni government to the Yemeni importers.

The two sides also agreed on arrangements for the settlement of payments for imported goods from either country through the central banks of the two countries and in convertible currencies.

They also underlined the importance of exchanging trade de-

legation visits and organising Jordanian trade fair in Yemen to try to sell \$1.5 million worth of Jordanian products.

According to the minutes, the two sides agreed on setting up joint projects of extracting and processing marble, granite, solar energy, building materials, animal feed, fish, and land and maritime transport.

The Jordanian and Yemeni ministers signed a new trade agreement for 1991.

The Council of Ministers Saturday also endorsed a draft agreement on a European Community (EC) grant to Jordan to help finance the seventh development plan of the Ministry of Education.

EC is granting Jordan more than \$1.8 million to help the ministry carry out the resolutions of the 1987 educational conference which decided on measures to overhaul the educational system in the Kingdom.

The EC grant will be in the form of technical assistance, training and scholarships.

According to the statement, the Cabinet authorised Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz to sign the agreement with the EC.

No more importation of powder milk for dairies

AMMAN (J.T.) — Agriculture Minister Suleiman Arabiyat Saturday stressed the government's determination to implement its decision of banning the importation of powdered milk that has been used in the dairy industry as of the coming month so as to open the way for the locally produced fresh milk to be used instead.

"Should the farms fail to provide sufficient milk to the processing plants, the Ministry of Agriculture will have to intervene and guarantee the supply of sufficient amounts of milk for the dairy production processes," said Arabiyat in a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Arabiyat, who was making the statement at a meeting with representatives of the dairy industry

and the Jordan Cooperative Organisation as well as the Cattle Breeders Association, announced a programme for supplying various dairies with fresh milk.

According to the plan, the Danish Company will receive 24 tonnes, the Jordan Dairy Company, 19 tonnes, Al Ra'i Dairy Firm, six tonnes, the Al Baqara Firm, four tonnes, and Al Faqih, one tonne on a daily basis.

The meeting followed reported disputes among the farmers and the dairy firms on the amounts that each of the local firms should receive for processing the milk.

It also followed an open message in the local press directed to Prime Minister Madad Badran urging government interference to settle the issue.

75 receive Jerusalem medal

AMMAN (J.T.) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat Saturday handed out the Jerusalem Medal for Culture and Arts to 75 Jordanians and Palestinians in an emotionally charged ceremony.

About 4,000 people packed the Royal Cultural Centre waving Palestinian flags, chanting songs backing the intifada in Palestine and hailing Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (P.L.O.).

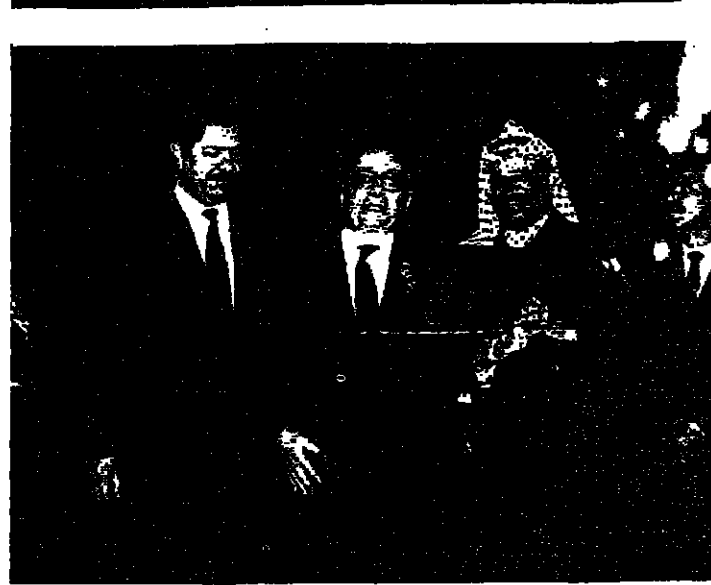
The ceremony was the second since the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council (PNC) in Algiers in November 1988. The medal is the highest cultural award given by the state.

Among those honoured were Rawhi Al Khatib, the expelled Mayor of Jerusalem, Hanna Nasser, expelled president of Beirut University in the West Bank and a dozen teachers, writers, artists, poets and journalists.

Also among them were the founders of the Jordan Times in 1976, Senator Juma'a Hammad who was chairman of the board of the Jordan Press Foundation that also publishes Al Ra'i Arabic daily and Raja Elissa who was deputy chairman of the board at the time.

"This is a medal for all professors and people working in the Palestinian universities... all those who are carrying out the cultural struggle and confronting the Israeli authorities," Nasser declared.

Universities and schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been closed throughout much of the three-year-old Palestinian uprising against occupation.



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat Saturday awards Juma'a Hammad (above) and Raja Elissa (below)

Jerusalem committee calls for actions to protest Israel's practices

AMMAN (Petra) — The People's Committee for the Defence of Jerusalem Saturday announced the formation of an executive bureau, chaired by former Mayor of Jerusalem Rawhi Al Khatib, and a series of actions to express protests against Jewish groups' illegal practices in the occupied city.

Labib Qamhawi, the committee's spokesman, said in a statement that the committee was calling for a sit-in at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sunday as part of the protest. "The sit-in will start 10 a.m. and last for six hours to be coincided with an hour-long sit-in in all churches of the Kingdom following the Sunday mass, according to Qamhawi."

The committee is also calling on people to stage an hour of sit-in at mosques in Jordan Monday to protest Israel's plans to desecrate holy shrines in the Arab city of Jerusalem and in a show of solidarity with the Palestinian people and their uprising against Israeli occupation.

"The sit-ins at the U.N. offices will serve as a gesture urging the United Nations to uphold its Security Council resolutions concerning Palestine and the Geneva Conventions on the protection of civilians in times of war," Qamhawi said.

"The committee has decided to send cables to the Arab League, the U.N. General Assembly and Security Council as well as to the five permanent members at the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Conference, the World Islamic League, the non-aligned nations' headquarters, the Organisation of African Unity, the Vatican, the European Community, the Socialists International and other organisations urging them to take actions designed to force the Israeli authorities to respect U.N. resolutions and the Geneva Conventions, and also to impose sanctions on the Jewish state to force it to respect world community resolutions,"

Qamhawi added.

Qamhawi disclosed a statement issued by the newly formed People's Committee for the Defence of Jerusalem which said that it embodied political parties, trade unions and prominent personalities from Jordan.

The statement said that the committee would be following up all matters related to Israel's illegal measures designed to Judaize the Holy City of Jerusalem and to destroy its holy shrines and change the demographic and historic character of the city.

The statement said that the committee would try to expose enemy plots in Jerusalem and enlist world public opinion's support for an action to abort Israeli plans.

The statement noted that the committee considered itself as part of the Palestinian people's intifada, "trying with all its might to end Israel's violations of the national and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

Ministry to collect overdue water fees from subscribers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Water and Irrigation has embarked on measures to collect long overdue water charges from subscribers, including private citizens and government and military institutions.

Ministry officials said that some of the bills had been outstanding for several years, amounting to JD 1.7 million.

The ministry has now issued notifications to all those who have failed to settle their bills and said in a statement that the sums to be collected were badly needed for new water projects to meet the country's urgent needs.

At the same time the ministry announced that it had prepared an economy plan for the distribution of drinking water to agricultural, domestic and industrial sectors as a precautionary measure to be implemented in case very little rain fell this season.

A report in Al Ra'i Arabic daily said that the industrial sector had showed reservations about the plan, noting that if implemented, it would have negative effects on industrial production.

The plan followed warnings by the ministry that strict measures would have to be taken in view of the scarce water resources in the Kingdom, and came in the wake of an announcement by the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) on Dec. 11 announcing that level of water in reservoirs behind dams are dangerously low.

JVA cautioned farmers to adhere strictly to a water distribution programme and warned that the available water resources for irrigating farms were decreasing every day.

Earlier this year, Minister of Water and Irrigation Daoud Khalaf said in a statement that Jordan was seeking to secure financing for the construction of Al Wahdah Dam, on the Yarmouk river near the Syrian border, to ensure there was enough water for irrigation purposes.

Meanwhile, the Department of Meteorology said Saturday that lack of rain for nearly a whole month was due to the effect of a high depression, but it predicted that rain would be coming to Jordan by Monday.

The department's Director General Ali Abanda said that the eastern Mediterranean region, where it did not rain in November and December, would be affected by the low depressions which now affect Europe.

Two weeks ago these depressions started moving east and south, towards the Mediterranean region, affecting North African regions, but they are now heading towards the eastern Mediterranean region.

"Should rain start to fall by Monday and continue throughout the remainder of this month, it would help salvage the winter crops, specially cereals which mostly depend on rain fall," said Abanda.

Minister of planning visits RSS

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Planning Khaled Amin Abdullah Saturday visited the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) where he met with its President Hani Al Mulki and several of its senior officials.

Al Mulki briefed Abdullah on

the history of the society, its goals, duties and scientific and technological achievements. Mulki also briefed the minister on RSS future projects and budget for the year 1991.

Abdullah then toured the society's centres and laboratories

where he was briefed by specialists and officials on the each sector's duties.

The minister affirmed that the ministry would extend every possible support for RSS and its projects to enable it achieve its goals.

Zaben opens health centres

SALT (Petra) — Minister of Health Mohammad Addoub Al Zaben Saturday met Balqa Governor Faleh Al Gharaibeh and several of the governorate's officials and discussed with them the governorate's health needs.

Zaben affirmed that the ministry would exert every possible effort to provide health services to citizens in accordance with its

capabilities. In another development Zaben opened Al Bugei health centre in Salt suburbs. The total cost of the centre, which will provide services to about 50,000 people, is estimated at JD 230,000.

Zaben also opened Al Kharabeh health centre that had a total cost of JD 80,000. The centre will be providing services

to 15,000 citizens. He also opened Ein Al Basha health centre which will provide services to 10,000 people. The centre's total cost reached JD 180,000.

Zaben was accompanied in his tour by the Balqa governor, the ministry's secretary general, Director of the Balqa Governorate health department.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ☆ Exhibition entitled "L'orient des cafes" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ☆ Art exhibition by Mukarram Haghondoga at the Spanish Cultural Centre.

FILMS

- ☆ Feature film entitled "Rocket to the Moon" at the American Centre — 7:00 p.m.
- ☆ Fritz-Lang film festival: "Die Nibelungen" (the second part) at the Goethe Institute — 8:00 p.m.

Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

Handwritten signature: *Yasser Arafat*

A game of words is a serious debate

By Badr Abdul Haq

I COULD not control myself when I read the very interesting article by Abdullah Hasanat in the weekend issue of the Jordan Times (Dec. 12-13). The article, on titles used in government circles and society at large, appeared prominently on the front page of the Times.

Before expressing my admiration for what Hasanat wrote, I would like to recall that the departed Jordanian poet, Taysir Sbeul (who committed suicide 17 years ago), had called in the early days of the establishment of Al Ra'i for the abolition of titles. In the first article he published in his column, which he called Hyde Park, Sbeul urged the abolition of antiquated titles starting with pasha, which was used with (Sir John Baggot)

Glub's name to afandi, which was used by anyone to address everybody else. Our baker in Zarqa in those days insisted that his customers call him afandi, or else their bread would be considerably delayed.

Sbeul advocated that the prime minister be called Mr. instead of dawlat (state), that a minister also addressed by Mr. rather than maafi and so on. He thought that titles should not be used to classify people or give privilege to some over the others.

Now after almost 20 years since Sbeul made his call, these titles are still widely used. Some high ranking officials get extremely angry if they are not addressed with the proper title that they view as befitting their position and status.

Now comes Abdullah Hasanat to reopen the file of titles.

He does so without offering his own opinion on either to use or abandon them. However, the style in which uftat al akh (his kindness our brother) Hasanat wrote his article might help our cause. It would not be far-fetched if, in the shadow of the democratic glasnost that Jordan is living under, some people might gather under some sort of anti-title association, that I believe should be called the Association of "Sufferers from Use of Titles." I would imagine that hundreds of less important civil servants would join the new association. But I can immediately see a counter association being formed; you know by whom.

I can see the battle that Sbeul waged 20 years ago being fought once more.

The above commentary is reprinted from Al Ra'i.

U.S. preparing to disarm Iraq psychologically

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia — The United States and Saudi Arabia are preparing to initiate a programme of covert psychological warfare as part of any Persian Gulf military action, according to U.S. military sources.

The plan includes clandestine propaganda broadcasts to persuade Iraqi soldiers and civilians to abandon the fight, they said.

Among operations already in progress, sources said, are efforts to smuggle hundreds of thousands of small transistor radios into Iraq over the Turkish and Saudi borders to provide a ready audience for Arabic-language messages aimed at sowing disruption and confusion across Iraq as war is waged.

With the United States planning to jam Iraq's internal radio and television frequencies, the broadcasts are envisioned as potentially powerful tools of war because they could provide the only information available to ordinary Iraqi citizens and soldiers on the front lines.

"What we want to do is to control what Iraqis know about the war," one knowledgeable source said.

Other, more overt programmes, modelled on the Voice of America news network, could simply relay accurate information about the progress of the war and provide assurances to Iraqi soldiers that they would not be mistreated if they surrendered or were captured.

One plan under consideration would deliberately spread disinformation by announcing that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was dead and urging Iraqi citizens and soldiers to throw down their weapons, the

source said.

Other, more overt programmes, modelled on the Voice of America news network, could simply relay accurate information about the progress of the war and provide assurances to Iraqi soldiers that they would not be mistreated if they surrendered or were captured.

The operation would mark a more widespread psychological-warfare campaign than was implemented a year ago in Panama, where invading U.S. forces primarily used loudspeaker-trucks to urge Panamanian military and paramilitary forces to abandon resistance efforts.

Military officials concluded that one of the most serious errors of the Panama operation was the failure to secure Panamanian television and radio transmitters in the early hours of the invasion. Days after U.S. paratroopers seized the country, secret broadcasts from ousted dictator Manuel Noriega were still urging Panamanians to resist the American troops.

But if war erupts in the Persian Gulf, one official said,

"one of the first things we'll do is take out their television and

"What we want to do is to control what Iraqis know about the war," one knowledgeable source said. One plan under consideration would deliberately spread disinformation by announcing that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was dead and urging Iraqi citizens and soldiers to throw down their weapons, the source said.

radio capabilities." In this theatre, the United

States could seek to disrupt Iraq even while remaining outside its borders. Sources said they think the campaign could undermine resistance to the point that U.S. casualties would be reduced if an invasion takes place.

Other plans under consideration would seek to distribute within Iraq clandestine loudspeakers containing a taped anti-Hussein message that could be programmed to boom across town squares and other public areas.

Sources acknowledged that U.S. and Saudi intelligence officials have found such operations to be difficult because of the extensive internal surveillance maintained by Iraqi security forces.

The radio-smuggling operation is well under way, however, and is supported by U.S. and Saudi intelligence officials. The radios are being transported primarily by tribesmen, who move easily across Iraq's borders. — Los Angeles Times News Service.

Dreams become a painful reality

By Sergei Shargorodsky
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — With more than 1,000 Soviet Jews arriving each day, both the immigrants and Israelis are learning it sometimes is painful when dreams come true.

This nation of 1.7 million will take in as many as 1 million Soviet immigrants within three years, putting extraordinary pressure on the country's economic and social fabric.

The Soviet immigrants' dream of escape to a haven in Israel has been shattered by government indecision and wrangling over creating jobs and providing housing.

But both the Israelis and the immigrants see hope in the future. Israelis believe the immigration will end their fear that a higher Arab birth rate will leave Jews outnumbered in their own state. The newcomers envision a better life tomorrow, at least for their children.

They rise before dawn to wait in line outside Absorption Ministry offices. Many waited silently even during the two-week strike by ministry workers, but some tacked up a sign in Russian: "Please end the strike. Stop torturing people."

The strike deprived thousands of immigrants of their only income, the already-meager government stipend.

A family of three receives the equivalent of \$9,000 a year, down from \$10,000 in June. Now there are plans to cut it to about \$8,000.

Even for a two-room apartment, the immigrants must pay up to \$6,000. The stipend also must cover food and other costs.

"The government is not allowing them even a minimum standard of living, while at the same time making it very hard for them to become productive members of Israeli society," said Vladimir Glosman of the Soviet Jewry Zionist Forum, an umbrella for immigrant groups.

Still, the immigrants are betting on the future. Two, three,



Ministry of Absorption workers demonstrate outside the prime minister's office in the second week of their strike. The large poster reads: "Moda! 70 per cent of us get wage supplements. Which one of us is irresponsible and cynical?"

even four immigrant families may share a two-bedroom apartment.

The supply of rental apartments is expected to run out by March, and Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz says tent cities soon will be necessary.

With the country's unemployment rate as high as 10 per cent, many immigrants must survive on the stipend.

Some gather spoiled fruits and vegetables thrown out by markets. Some women have become prostitutes. Another, a mother of two in her 20s, said she is looking for "a rich Israeli who will feed us."

Still, there are successes, people who got jobs in their professions, and many examples of aid and kindness by Israeli families.

There also are stories of unscrupulous landlords and employers, of professionals who sweep the streets or wash dishes. Cardiologist Edward Zaslavsky and his economist wife Polina scrub the floors of Jerusalem's business administration college to support themselves and their 17-year-old twin girls.

"I was mentally prepared for any difficulties before we came to Israel, but I admit that this kind of work was below my expectations," Mrs. Zaslavsky

told an Israeli newspaper.

The immigrants are gradually replacing Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as Israel's low-income workers. They are "the country's new slaves," as the daily newspaper Maariv put it.

Within months, thousands of immigrants will mark the first anniversary in Israel and will find themselves with no jobs and unable to cover rent with lower, second-year subsidies.

"I don't know what to do," said Diana Kudriavtzev, a 20-year-old Russian student with a wife and newborn son. "We will probably find ourselves in the street."

The bulk of the immigrants accept such hardship. In Israel, they say, at least they have hope.

There is also despair. In November, a 53-year-old woman from the Ukraine jumped to her death, leaving a note that said her husband had no work. Last Monday, Leonid Brun, 53, hanged himself in Beersheba. He was jobless and his note said he could not adjust to life in Israel.

Although these are isolated cases, some officials have criticized the government for its absorption failures. Comptroller Miriam Ben-

Porat put it this way: "The heart throbs in pain over lack of action, failures and the shortsightedness of the government in its preparation for absorption of the immigration waves."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir dismissed her words as an unprecedented attack on a proud Israeli institution. He said "such sweeping criticism" exceeded Mrs. Ben-Porat's authority.

She was not alone, however. The daily Yedioth Ahronoth, for instance, recently ran a series of articles on immigrant absorption under a banner headline in Russian: "proval" — "failure."

Failure or not, the impact of the immigration flood and the magnitude of the task ahead are beginning to dawn on Israel and its people. Some are even voicing doubts about whether Israel can take the strain.

Absorbing the Soviet Jewish tide is "a mission brodering upon the impossible," Finance Minister Yitzhak Modai said in a Tel Aviv speech last week. "In the coming years, we will have to spend \$10 to \$60 billion, a huge sum ... beyond the state budget."

For Modai and the majority of Israelis, immigration still re-

mains a "miracle." But there is a price.

Last month, the cabinet approved a hike in the value-added tax from 16 per cent to 18 per cent. It also levied a so-called immigration tax, a 5 per cent surcharge on income taxes for the next three years.

The military fought budget cuts, but lost. The 1991 budget, for the first time, allocates more to immigrant absorption than to defense spending, traditionally a sacred cow in Israel.

Israelis are beginning to understand that immigration will mean fierce competition for jobs, a further increase in high housing prices, apartment shortages and overcrowded schools and social services.

Palestinians already complain about lost jobs, and now Israel's 900,000 Arab citizens express fears their jobs and land could be taken away.

A bitter land dispute has arisen between Nazareth Illit, a city of 28,000 which took in 5,000 immigrants this year, and the Arabs of Nazareth. Housing Minister Ariel Sharon wants to settle 10,000 immigrants among the Arab villages around Nazareth.

As for jobs, a recent immigrant from Tadjikistan, Michael Alterman, went to work in a Jerusalem metal working factory and noticed his Arab colleagues were disappearing.

"They fired Mahmoud who taught us everything," said Alterman. "It does give a bad feeling but I have to eat."

Still, as the Gulf crisis forces the Israelis to have gas masks handy and the three-year-old Palestinian revolt becomes ever more violent, the wave of newcomers is a consolation for Israel.

Shamir said that the Soviet influx has buried Israel's fears of being submerged by a growing Arab population.

"In a few years," he said, "we will recognise the land of Israel. Everything will have changed — society, the economy, the culture."

Arafat

(Continued from page 1)

the Gulf crisis cannot succeed if there is no Arab-Arab dialogue that is crowned by an Arab summit," Arafat told reporters at Amman's airport.

He said Arabs should not trust the United States when it says a settlement of the Palestinian problem would be discussed once Iraq pulled out of Kuwait.

"From what the Americans are doing at the Security Council, we cannot trust what they are offering now... that after the Gulf crisis they will solve the Palestinian and Middle East crises," Arafat said.

"The U.S. is not only procrastinating but is also pressuring all Security Council members to try and evade the peace parity."

In Baghdad earlier Saturday, Arafat and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz held talks. The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said they discussed developments in the region and "the U.S. anti-Palestinian stand in the United Nations."

The U.N. Security Council has been debating a draft resolution calling for the protection of Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The draft also refers to a Middle East peace conference.

Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

the dates," said the spokesman. The RCC spokesman said Iraq had proposed that the United States set the date for a meeting between Bush and Aziz in Washington. Baghdad should choose the date of the meeting in the Iraqi capital, he said.

"We had informed the American side that their dates were not suitable for us and suggested the 12th of January as the date for meeting in Baghdad. But the U.S. administration insisted on its first proposal... and we suggested that the American side choose a date for the Washington meeting provided that we select the date of the Baghdad meeting by ourselves."

"We had also expressed readiness (for) any time chosen by the American side for the Washington meeting on the basis of reciprocal dealing but the U.S. administration rejected that and insisted on its attitude," he said.

Jassem said the dates dispute was a matter of principle, saying any president had the right to fix the date for a foreign minister's visit. "It's one of the simplest aspects of sovereignty," he told a news conference in Baghdad later Saturday.

"Serious and deep dialogue will lead us to solve the problem," he said, accusing Bush of making his talks offer only as a public relations exercise.

If Bush fixed a new date for Aziz's visit, he said, "We will fix a certain date for Baker."

He could not say whether Saddam might offer a new date or would stick to Jan. 12.

Iraq says Bush is using the dispute over the talks to mislead U.S. public opinion and Congress about his intentions to attack Iraq.

Bush said Jan. 12 would not leave Iraq time to withdraw its forces by the U.N. Security Council deadline three days later.

"That deadline is real," said Bush, adding that Iraqi forces must be "totally out, totally out," by then.

Bush originally invited Saddam to receive Baker any time between Dec. 15 and Jan. 15. However, now Saddam's proposal of Jan. 12 is seen as a delaying tactic by Iraq.

"I wish now I had been a little more explicit in my first announcement," said Bush. "I did not offer to be a part to Saddam Hussein's manipulation."

Bush has also said the purpose of Baker's talks is not to negotiate a settlement, but to issue a face-to-face demand that Iraq withdraw its troops from Kuwait.

The RCC repeated Saturday that any talks must follow Iraq's Aug. 12 initiative linking any resolution of the Gulf crisis to a comprehensive settlement of all Middle East problems.

"The initiative is our guide for any dialogue with the U.S. administration or others, because any

serious dialogue must aim at achieving a comprehensive and just solution for the problems of the region, particularly the Palestinian issue," the RCC spokesman said.

Baker's deputy said Saturday that any meeting between the secretary of state and President Saddam would be brief and to the point and would not constitute negotiations.

"We're going to make it as clear as we can to Saddam Hussein we are serious about enforcing the (U.N.) Security Council resolutions." Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said on Cable News Network (CNN) television.

"Saddam Hussein will then have to make up his own mind on what he's going to do about it."

He said the session was likely to be brief — "five minutes to five hours" — but was unlikely to continue for more than a day or two and would not include negotiations. "If you say 'no negotiations' and you mean it, then there aren't any negotiations," Eagleburger said.

EC

(Continued from page 1)

Gulf and with the Middle East in two separate resolutions to avoid any impression that they were linking the two, as Iraq has called for.

They also wanted to avoid offending the United States, which opposes an international conference on the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

The fact that Saddam has talked about the Palestinians doesn't mean anything," Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, whose country holds the EC presidency, told a news conference.

"What is important is that we have it said with great clarity that one does not solve the problem of the Palestinians by occupying Kuwait and refusing to get out of it."

"But the fact is that, with the same rigour, we must place on the agenda a renewed commitment to solve the problem of everyone's security, including Israel, including the Palestinians," he added.

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Jordan Times
JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Fouilles dans la vallée

Pour un éveil à l'archéologie

Faire comprendre l'archéologie dans tous ses raffinements et dans toute sa complexité à des enfants de moins de quatorze ans pourrait sembler un pari impossible. Avec son livre, qui sera bientôt dans toutes les écoles de Jordanie dans sa version arabe, l'archéologue française Geneviève Dollfus l'a gagné. Clair, précis, romancé, illustré, «Fouilles dans la vallée» présente aussi l'atout, aux yeux des petits Jordaniens, de se dérouler ici même, entre Amman et la vallée du Jourdain.

«Nous sommes en Jordanie. C'est vendredi, la capitale Amman est tout endormie. Les oiseaux chantent. Réveillé par ce concert, un enfant répondant au nom d'Anakou se lève. C'est un garçon d'une dizaine d'années vif et curieux. Vendredi, jour sans école Anakou a quelques faibles, un peu de homos; il ouvre la porte...»

Ainsi commence l'histoire de ce jeune garçon dont le grand-père est maraîcher dans la vallée du Jourdain et qui, en l'accompagnant, va découvrir les archéologues qui travaillent et le sens de leur travail.

Le livre est écrit par Geneviève Dollfus, archéologue française et directrice de recherche au Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). Elle a travaillé plusieurs années avec l'Institut

contre, les douze spécialistes (géographe, lithicien, céramologue, architecte...) qui constituent une équipe archéologique. A la fin du livre, l'enfant revit, grâce à ces vestiges et à leur sens retrouvé, la vie de ses ancêtres, migrant il y a 6.000 ans de la vallée du Jourdain aux plateaux, et des plateaux à la vallée, au gré des changements climatiques. Une abondante illustration aux couleurs claires qui attirent le regard des enfants a été dessinée par une amie de Geneviève Dollfus, Louise Desrochers, spécialiste du dessin archéologique.

En français, le livre est publié par les éditions parisiennes Syros-Alternatives dans la langue de Molière et dans celle des Mille et une nuits, grâce à la traduction de Mathila Khalaf, relue par Youssef Abou Sheh.

De bonne, l'idée devient géniale et donne à la coopération franco-jordanienne tout son sens lorsqu'il est décidé de distribuer 4.000 exemplaires de ce livre dans l'ensemble des écoles jordaniennes. La direction générale des programmes et des techniques d'enseignement du Ministère jordanien de l'Education, en collaboration avec le Centre National de la Recherche et du Développement de l'Education (CNRDE) qui est affilié à la Royal Scientific Society, s'intéressent au livre



Une des pages de la version en arabe du livre de Geneviève Dollfus.

moitié par le ministère de l'Education jordanien.

L'auteur du livre, Geneviève Dollfus, ne pouvait être à Amman lundi dernier, lorsque l'ambassadeur de France à Amman, M. Denis Bauchard, a remis au ministre de l'Education, M. Mohammed Hamdane, les 4.000 exemplaires du livre. En son absence, l'Ambassadeur et les

représentants des autorités jordaniennes ont pu dire tout le bien qu'ils pensaient d'elle: tous ont salué son dynamisme et son efficacité sur ce projet. Désormais, Anakou en France et Hareth en Jordanie, n'ont plus qu'à faire leur travail: éveiller les enfants à l'archéologie, en leur procurant du plaisir.

Jean-Marc Bordes

LA SEMAINE...

de Suleiman Sweiss

La tête contre les murs

Ils sont des centaines de millions, peut-être un ou deux milliards, hommes, femmes, jeunes, vieux, handicapés, en prison ou «libres», de toutes les couleurs de peau, qui ne jouissent pas encore de tous leurs droits humains. Des massacres, des exécutions sommaires ou extra-judiciaires sont commis par les autorités de temps à autre, dans un pays où dans un autre, contre des populations ou des individus innocents.

Des centaines de milliers de personnes croupissent dans les geôles pour avoir osé exprimer leurs idées et leurs croyances à haute voix ou pour avoir agi pacifiquement en leur faveur. Nombre d'entre elles subissent la torture et certaines vont même à la guillotine. Parfois, des manifestants sont arrêtés, des citoyens «disparaissent», d'autres sont refoulés aux frontières.

Malais, quoique dur et révoltant, n'est que la forme la plus injuste et la plus brutale des violations des droits de l'homme dans le monde d'aujourd'hui.

D'autres formes — moins visibles — de répression juridique, administrative et pratique sont appliquées tous les jours, partout, qui laissent derrière elles des souffrances et des cicatrices morales, sociales et psychologiques pénibles chez des centaines de milliers de personnes et leurs familles.

Il y a quelques années, un hebdomadaire français a consacré sa couverture à la question des droits de l'homme et a annoncé qu'elle dominerait les préoccupations du monde jusqu'à la fin du siècle.

Il est presque certain aujourd'hui que la lutte pour les droits humains s'intensifie au fur et à mesure que les violations se multiplient. Cela se comprend car il s'avère que cette question ne peut être isolée ou considérée sous son aspect strictement humaniste. Même les organisations et les militants qui évitent de «se mêler» à la dimension politique de cette affaire, reconnaissent aujourd'hui qu'il s'agit bien des intérêts politiques, économiques, ethniques ou culturels des peuples ou de certains groupes sociaux, à défendre ou à protéger.

Défendre les droits humains dépend avant tout des efforts et des sacrifices des hommes libres qui prennent en charge cette tâche noble. Mais on se rend compte de plus en plus de l'importance de la prise de conscience par les peuples de leurs droits. C'est encore plus vrai en ce qui concerne le monde arabe. Le mouvement des droits de l'homme, quoiqu'en évolution, y est toujours l'affaire des élites intellectuelles et politiques. A cet égard, les efforts déployés par l'Institut International des Sciences Criminelles à Syracuse (Italie) sont à signaler. Depuis cinq ans, il applique «un programme arabe pour les droits de l'homme» et il a publié en arabe cinq volumes sur cette question, qui sont primordiaux dans les mouvements des droits humains dans le monde arabe. Introduire cette discipline dans le programme des Universités, des écoles et d'autres établissements est un facteur fondamental pour élever la conscience des citoyens arabes de leurs droits. Permettre aux mass-médias d'évoquer d'avantage les problèmes des droits humains fait aussi partie de la pratique démocratique dans les pays qui ont entamé l'ouverture politique chez eux.

Cette prise de conscience a besoin d'être accélérée sur les plans politique, social et culturel. La semaine dernière un des thèmes débattus au cours de la «semaine culturelle jordanienne», a été «la démocratie comme moyen de radicaliser la lutte palestinienne dans le discours culturel arabe». Des interventions d'une profondeur remarquable ont eu lieu, particulièrement celle de l'intellectuel marocain Abdul-Latif La'abi.

En ce 42ème anniversaire de la Déclaration universelle des Droits de l'Homme (le 10 décembre), il devient plus évident que l'humanité, et plus particulièrement le Tiers-Monde ne pourront pas inaugurer le siècle prochain en paix, si l'état des droits de l'homme ne s'améliore pas sensiblement au cours des années à venir.

Archéologie

La vie quotidienne au Proche-Orient ancien

C'est en décodant 20.000 tablettes d'argile que les archéologues français ont pu reconstituer avec une précision inégalée la vie sociale, économique et religieuse des débuts du deuxième millénaire. Ces tablettes sont les archives royales de Mari, ville prestigieuse de Mésopotamie.

Le site de Mari, fouillé depuis 1934, a été particulièrement fécond: dans tous les domaines de l'art et de l'industrie mésopotamiens: bijoux, statues, peintures, grande architecture et surtout documents administratifs et épistolaires de Zimri-Lim, dernier roi de Mari (1775-1761 av. J.C.), archives incises, en écriture cunéiforme, sur des surfaces argileuses. Les premiers répertoires des prélèvements faits sur les stocks du palais royal.

Ce sont des bulletins précis et laconiques, particulièrement révélateurs (ils sont datés), des besoins du palais et de sa consommation alimentaire, vestimentaire ou industrielle. On connaît ainsi la «Maison» du roi et sa composition: vaste domaine féminin: filles, épouses de premier rang, servantes des

jeunes princes, concubines de premier et deuxième rang, éducatrices, administratrices, servantes. Leurs noms mêmes sont notés à chaque distribution d'huile ou de laine.

On ne sait malheureusement pas comment ces stocks ont été constitués (impôts, taxes, réquisitions, tributs?). Mais les échanges entre rois de cadeaux somptueux dont témoignent les archives nous renseignent sur les relations internationales de l'époque: on y voit se nouer et se dénouer les alliances, et on a pour la première fois un aperçu des économies régionales.

Comme les présents sont des spécialités locales, on peut y suivre la circulation de l'étain, du cuivre, du lapis-lazuli, des vins, des textiles et des œuvres d'art. On suit aussi les déplacements de personnes (prisonniers de guerre, chanteurs, danseuses...). S'y révèlent enfin les rapports du souverain avec ses administrateurs et ses vassaux. Beaucoup d'autres informations administratives, bien qu'elles soient partielles, ont l'avantage d'être uniques.

Les documents épistolaires

Jacques Randonneau



Le païssage de la «Victoire» en mosaïque et coquille représente le roi de Mari et ses fils.

Invention

Les hologrammes en trois dimensions

Dennis Gabor, Britannique d'origine hongroise, a proposé dès 1948 de restituer en relief des images photographiées sur un support plan. Mais il a fallu attendre l'invention du laser pour que cette technique prenne son essor. Et elle a valu à son auteur le prix Nobel de physique en 1971.

Un jeune spécialiste français de l'optique, Thierry Garçon, vient de l'enrichir: les images qu'il produit sont parfaitement tri-dimensionnelles; on peut tourner autour, en voir le dessous; jusqu'à un ou deux centimètres elles sont nettes, et l'angle d'observation n'a pas d'importance.

Son support consiste à employer un support concave léger, jusqu'à un mètre carré de superficie, et une tête de lecture à lumière halogène.

Le premier appareil, qu'il a construit dans son propre laboratoire, donnait des im-

ages de 30 cm sur 40 cm, très remarquables au premier salon de l'Innovation (à la Grande Halle de la Villette, à Paris) dès la fin de 1989. Les spécialistes américains et soviétiques ont aussitôt invité le jeune inventeur à venir faire des démonstrations à Leningrad et à Boston.

Ces images artificielles pourraient servir à la décoration intérieure, à la publicité, comme griffe anti-fraude sur des produits de luxe, à présenter des objets d'art uniques dans plusieurs lieux simultanément. L'inventeur imagine qu'elles pourraient accroître le volume apparent d'un studio, par exemple, et le transformer en palais peuplé d'objets rares...

Elles auraient aussi beaucoup d'applications à la formation (optique, météorologie, armement, aéronautique...), là où il faut simuler, notamment pour apprendre à piloter certains engins.

Jacques Randonneau

Temps de chien

L'hiver a lancé sa première offensive sur la France et ses voisins européens au cours du week-end dernier, avec des neiges précoces qui ont rendu les routes dangereuses et privé d'électricité plus de 300.000 foyers à l'est et au centre de la France.

En Europe, c'est le centre de l'Angleterre qui a été le plus touché par les intempéries: circulation paralysée sur des dizaines de routes, voies de chemins de fer et aéroports; coupures d'électricité et d'eau affectant plus d'un demi-million de Britanniques, huit d'entre eux ayant trouvé la mort.

La moitié nord de l'Espagne a également subi de fortes tempêtes de neige. 7.000 touristes espagnols sont restés bloqués dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche en Andorre et ont dû être hébergés dans des bâtiments publics.

L'est de la France n'a pas été épargné par la neige. Dimanche matin, 300.000 foyers étaient sans électricité ou sans téléphone. Les premières coupures étaient dues à la «neige collante» dont le poids a fait s'effondrer les câbles, d'autres à des chutes d'arbres sur les lignes aériennes. Fait inhabituel, la Bretagne (ouest), généralement à l'abri de la neige, s'est retrouvée sous une épaisse couche qui a atteint jusqu'à 20 cm.

La neige a ainsi rendu les routes dangereuses, voire impraticables dans plusieurs régions, et la sécurité routière a conseillé aux automobilistes de «rester au chaud». De nombreuses manifestations sportives ont été annulées.

Le tunnel du Mont-Blanc a été fermé lundi soir à la circulation dans les deux sens, pour une durée indéterminée.

En Suisse, l'ensemble du trafic était fortement perturbé: aéroports fermés, retards dans les trains, routes embouteillées voire coupées. Le tronçon ferroviaire entre Dôle (France) et Vallorbe (Suisse), emprunté notamment par la ligne Paris-Lausanne, a dû être notamment coupé à partir de lundi soir jusqu'à mardi midi et les trains détournés.

L'Allemagne a également été gagnée lundi par les tempêtes de neige qui ont provoqué un véritable chaos sur les routes, surtout dans le sud, l'ouest et le centre.

La neige fait cependant des heureux: les stations de ski, qui avaient été durement touchées par les pénuries de neige au cours des dernières années.

(Agences)

EN BREF

Islamistes. L'association intégriste des Frères Musulmans va faire partie du gouvernement jordanien pour la première fois dans l'histoire du pays, à l'occasion d'un remaniement ministériel prévu au cours des prochains jours. Quatre à cinq porte-feuilles, dont le ministère de l'Education Nationale (longtemps réclamés par les Frères Musulmans) seront confiés à cette association au sein du gouvernement remanié du Premier ministre Moudar Badrane, dont près de la moitié des membres seront des parlementaires. Ce remaniement suit les élections à la présidence de la Chambre des Députés, remportées le 17 novembre par le porte-parole des Frères Musulmans (22 des 80 députés de la Chambre); Abdel Latif Arabiyat. Aucun porte-feuille politique ne devrait être confié aux Frères Musulmans qui occuperaient — outre l'Education — les ministères de la Santé, du Travail, des Affaires Sociales et de l'Agriculture.

Enlèves. Sa Majesté le roi Hussein a accusé jeudi à Amman «certaines parties» d'empêcher les dirigeants arabes et islamiques de trouver une issue à la crise du Golfe et a affirmé que «l'occasion est toujours propice pour résoudre la crise dans un cadre arabe». D'autres parties (qu'il n'a pas nommées, ne se soucient pas de nos intérêts et ne veulent pas que les dirigeants arabes et islamiques soutiennent nos causes ni les traitent conformément à leur responsabilité historique). Le Premier ministre jordanien, Moudar Badrane, avait accusé la veille au Parlement, les Etats-Unis de torpiller le dialogue inter-arabe pour empêcher tout règlement politique de la crise du Golfe. Il avait fait état d'un «plan étranger destiné à entraver le dialogue arabo-arabe» et affirmé que «certains frères arabes réagissent favorablement à cette orientation».

Dates. L'Irak a refusé jeudi que les Etats-Unis fixent une date pour la rencontre à Bagdad entre le président irakien Saddam Hussein et le secrétaire d'Etat américain James Baker. «C'est l'Irak qui fixe lui-même la date adéquate pour une visite dans sa capitale et une rencontre avec son président» a indiqué un porte-parole du ministère irakien des Affaires Etrangères, ajoutant qu'il est aussi du droit des Etats-Unis de faire la même chose pour la visite à Washington du chef de la diplomatie irakienne Tarek Aziz en vue d'une rencontre avec le président Américain George Bush. M. Baker avait demandé au président irakien de le recevoir début janvier au plus tard, rejetant la date du 12 janvier proposée par Bagdad. Cette date avait été jugée «fondamentalement inacceptable» par les Etats-Unis pour qui le 12 janvier est trop proche de la date du 15 janvier à partir de laquelle l'usage de la force a été autorisé par l'ONU pour contraindre Bagdad à se retirer du Koweït.

Reports. Les Etats-Unis ont réussi une nouvelle fois à repousser l'éventuel vote par le Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU d'un projet de résolution concernant la question palestinienne, en dépit des grincements de dents de certains de leurs partenaires. Epaulés par l'URSS qui, pour la troisième fois consécutive, a fait voter par le Conseil une exceptionnelle motion de renvoi, les Etats-Unis restent ainsi fidèles à deux objectifs: n'établir aucun lien entre la question palestinienne et la crise du Golfe comme le demande Saddam Hussein, et éviter d'avoir à opposer sur ce sujet leur veto qui serait dommageable aux pays arabes modérés de la coalition anti-irakienne. Ce projet de résolution, présenté en novembre par la Colombie, Cuba, la Malaisie et le Yémen, traite essentiellement de la protection des Palestiniens dans les territoires occupés par Israël et se réfère à la tenue d'une conférence de paix internationale au Moyen-Orient. Le document rappelle également que Jérusalem fait partie des territoires occupés. Deux des cinq membres permanents du Conseil de Sécurité, la France et la Chine, ont laissé filer leur désapprobation en s'abstenant de donner leur aval à ces reports successifs. Il s'agissait à la fois de dire que Paris et Pékin étaient prêts à voter en l'état le texte proposé et de se démarquer des Etats-Unis.

Diplomatie. Le Premier ministre israélien Yitzhak Shamir a quitté Washington jeudi globalement satisfait de trois jours de discussions qui n'ont apparemment rien changé aux différences de points de vue entre Israël et les Etats-Unis mais ont aussi confirmé que les deux pays restent indissolublement liés. La satisfaction du Premier ministre vient à la fois de la réaffirmation du soutien de Washington à l'état hébreu et de sa rencontre avec le ministre des Affaires Etrangères soviétique Edouard Chevernadze. Cette rencontre, la première à un niveau aussi élevé depuis la rupture de 1967 entre l'URSS et Israël, a été perçue comme une poursuite par l'Union Soviétique de sa politique de lent rapprochement avec Israël accompagnée d'un refus pour l'instant de rétablir des relations diplomatiques.

Emeutes. La grève générale de vendredi dernier au Maroc a tourné à l'émeute dans plusieurs villes du pays, notamment à Fez et à Tanger. Il semblerait que l'armée, encerclée par les manifestants, ait fait usage de ses armes à feu faisant deux morts selon les autorités marocaines (une vingtaine selon les syndicats) et 127 blessés. La police a procédé par ailleurs à une centaine d'arrestations.

Albanie. L'Albanie a finalement accepté mardi soir de passer au multipartisme et de remettre en cause le monopole du parti communiste au pouvoir depuis 45 ans. Une mesure prise alors que la poursuite des manifestations étudiantes à Tirana depuis trois jours, risquait de dégénérer en une nouvelle explosion de mécontentement, général. La création annoncée aussitôt à Tirana d'un premier parti politique indépendant, le Parti des étudiants et des jeunes intellectuels, constitue le premier signe concret d'une opposition organisée. En Albanie, phénomène inconnu jusqu'à présent dans ce pays, si l'on exclut quelques grèves et manifestations rapportées de sources indépendantes.

Walesa. Le leader de Solidarité, Lech Walesa, a obtenu 74% des voix contre 26% à l'homme d'affaires Stanislaw Tyminski, au second tour de l'élection présidentielle polonaise dimanche dernier, devenant ainsi le nouveau chef d'Etat du pays. Très symboliquement, le premier geste du président Walesa a été de rendre visite aux ouvriers des chantiers navals de Gdansk, là où dix ans plus tôt, petit électricien moustachu, il avait mis le feu aux poudres en Pologne et, par contagion, dans tout le bloc socialiste.

Séisme. Le violent tremblement de terre qui a secoué l'est de la Sicile dans la nuit de mercredi à jeudi a fait au moins treize morts et deux cent blessés dont cinq sont dans un état grave. Le séisme d'une intensité de 7 sur l'échelle de Mercalli (qui en compte 12) a été ressenti sur tout le versant oriental de la Sicile, sur les îles éoliennes, en Calabre, et même à Malte où aucune victime n'a toutefois été déplorée. Le tremblement de terre a provoqué un énorme mouvement de panique. Selon les télévisions locales, près de deux millions de personnes sont descendues dans les rues par crainte de nouvelles secousses. Dans une bourgade, des bandits ont profité de la confusion pour percer le mur d'une banque et emporter tout l'argent que contenaient ses caisses.

Boulouque. Le juge d'instruction parisien Gilles Boulouque s'est donné la mort dans la nuit de mercredi à jeudi en se tirant une balle dans la bouche. A 40 ans, il avait déjà derrière lui une longue carrière de magistrat instructeur spécialisé dans les affaires de terrorisme. En instruisant l'affaire des sanglants attentats de 1986 à Paris, il avait été au centre d'une polémique politico-judiciaire d'envergure après sa décision de laisser partir libre vers l'Iran, en novembre 1987, Vahid Ghorji considéré comme le numéro deux de l'Ambassade iranienne en France. Dans un premier temps, le magistrat avait voulu, en vain, faire interdire Ghorji, considérant qu'il pouvait être impliqué dans ces attentats, puis, en marge de la «guerre des ambassades» et du bras de fer entre Paris et Téhéran, il avait estimé qu'aucune charge ne pouvait être retenue contre lui.

Dragonien. Le parlement français a adopté jeudi soir définitivement le plus ambitieux projet de loi jamais déposé en France contre le tabagisme et l'alcoolisme. D'ici 1993, toute publicité directe ou indirecte sur le tabac sera interdite. Pour les alcools, elle sera autorisée dans la presse écrite, mais interdite dans les publications pour la jeunesse et elle sera restreinte sur les radios commerciales aux heures de faible écoute des jeunes. Il sera interdit de fumer dans les lieux à usage collectif comme les écoles ou les moyens de transport, sauf dans des emplacements expressément réservés aux fumeurs. Enfin, les marques de tabac et d'alcool sont désormais interdites de parrainage.

Opinion Eloge de la sagesse

Comme tous les intellectuels du monde, les intellectuels jordaniens hésitent entre la quête du pouvoir et la fidélité à leurs principes. Le pouvoir représente à leurs yeux non seulement la possibilité de bien vivre mais aussi celle d'échapper à la solitude et de satisfaire le clan et les amis. Ce sont les raisons profondes de leurs choix, souvent dissimulées derrière des arguments de conscience visant à manifester leur différence. Ecrire dans les journaux pour faire connaître son nom et devenir célèbre n'est qu'un des moyens utilisés pour sortir du troupeau et commencer une ascension de l'échelle sociale.

Entre la religion et les traditions, l'art d'être libre nécessite beaucoup de talent. Comment peut-on penser librement quand l'opinion différente est rejetée par tout le monde. L'espoir d'être libre dans les sociétés traditionnelles exige le passage par une phase hypocrite, dans l'attente de l'heure du changement.

La révolution russe, par exemple a mis soixante-dix ans pour comprendre que l'homme naît libre et que s'il est possible de lui apprendre des principes ou des idées, il est en revanche impossible de lui imposer ses croyances. Ce n'est pas se moquer que dire que la révolution russe a mis soixante-dix ans pour comprendre que l'homme naît libre. Il faut rendre hommage, au contraire, à cette révolution qui a ouvert la voie de la civilisation moderne. Soixante-dix ans n'est rien à l'échelle de l'Histoire. D'autres peuples dans le Tiers-Monde attendent depuis des siècles et n'arrivent pas encore à comprendre qu'il est impossible d'imposer à l'être humain des croyances.

La démocratie elle-même n'est pas toujours un gage de liberté intellectuelle. La foule est toujours plus nombreuse et l'histoire abonde en exemples de démocraties où l'intellectuel a toujours été écrasé. La démocratie d'Athènes a condamné à mort Socrate, le plus sage de ses citoyens; la démocratie de Rome a ramené les tyrans au pouvoir et c'est par la démocratie qu'Hitler est arrivé à ses fins. Bien d'autres exemples montrent que l'intellectuel est souvent perdant, sauf dans ses livres.

Donner un rôle aux intellectuels, en Jordanie comme dans toutes les sociétés traditionnelles est difficile.

C'est dans l'histoire qu'il faut chercher les causes de notre décadence. La crise du monde arabe, incapable d'entrer dans la civilisation moderne, est la première responsable de son avortement culturel. Pour accoucher d'une culture réelle, différente et solide, la Nation arabe doit opter pour une politique plus consciente des racines culturelles de l'humanité.

Les étapes successives de l'histoire arabe n'ont pas déclenché le mouvement conduisant au progrès économique et culturel. L'essentiel du capital est toujours resté aux mains de l'Etat et donc aux mains d'une seule personne, le Kalif, qui en a usé la plupart du temps pour son plaisir personnel. Des fortunes énormes n'ont été investies que pour des noces et des poésies. La cuisine du Kalif a englouti parfois la moitié des revenus de l'Etat. L'accumulation des capitaux pour atteindre la richesse nécessaire au développement économique était un péché passible de la peine de mort. La révolution industrielle, seule clé d'accès aux époques modernes, n'a jamais été accomplie.

Les difficultés du transport et l'étendue du monde arabe n'ont pas aidé non plus à établir le contact nécessaire entre les différents espaces. Pendant des siècles, la société arabe est restée en sommeil, dans les bras de l'Empire ottoman, presque coupée du monde.

Dans cette insécurité et cette instabilité, l'individu se sentait à tout moment menacé d'une agression par les bandes, les tribus ou même l'Etat. Quand il disposait d'une petite fortune, il la cachait dans la terre pour les jours difficiles plutôt que de prendre le risque de l'investir. Hormis l'Etat, personne donc n'affichait sa fortune au grand jour. Aujourd'hui encore on découvre des fortunes d'or cachées sous la terre et dans les rochers.

L'éducation moralisante et l'esprit de domination n'ont pas éveillé le sens de la responsabilité chez l'individu. Il a préféré baisser la tête que se la faire couper. L'esprit de changement aurait imposé des sacrifices, sans résultats.

La seule force capable de changer les choses était l'Etat donc le chef, qui, en tant que tel, n'avait pas d'intérêt au changement. Ce destin désertique a laissé l'homme souffrant et seul, s'en remettant à Dieu pour le protéger des dangers.

Il est important que les Etats arabes modernes accélèrent le changement et découvrent les maux arabes pour éviter les crises de l'avenir. Pas de changement possible sans une reconnaissance préalable des défauts.

Il faut chercher l'origine des choses et parler d'elles comme elles sont et telles qu'elles apparaissent. On n'a plus besoin des poètes romantiques qui exagèrent et nous apprennent à exagérer. On a besoin d'hommes sages qui nous enseignent l'art d'être objectif sans être agressif. La gestion du présent nécessite de grands hommes d'Etat, capables de distinguer le paroleur du penseur, l'hypocrite du fidèle, le tricheur de l'intellectuel.

Fayyaz Alkuraizat

Père-Lachaise

Le cimetière-jardin des Parisiens

Après la tour Eiffel, Notre-Dame et l'Arc de Triomphe, le cimetière du Père-Lachaise est le quatrième site le plus visité par les touristes en balade dans la capitale française: il en accueille un million chaque année.

A l'est de la ville, la nécropole s'étend sur un coteau où l'évêque de Paris entretenait vignes et pressoirs au Moyen-Age. Au XVIIIème siècle, un jésuite célèbre y vécut: le père François d'Aix de Lachaise, confesseur de Louis XIV.

C'est au début du siècle dernier qu'on eut l'idée d'en faire une nécropole. Sa réalisation fut confiée à Brongniart, l'architecte de la Bourse, qui fit en sorte qu'elle conservât l'aspect d'un jardin. Le cimetière ouvrit ses portes en 1804 et l'on y transféra quelques sépultures célèbres, empruntées aux autres cimetières parisiens.

Aujourd'hui, le Père-Lachaise s'étend sur 44 hectares. Avec 53.000 arbres, c'est le plus grand espace vert de Paris. Erables, frênes, marronniers, platanes, robiniers, voisinent avec des essences rares: plataniers du Levant et chicots du Canada.

Certaines tombes font l'objet d'un véritable culte. Le mausolée en forme de dolmen d'Alan Karadek, le père du spiritisme, est le plus fleuri du cimetière: poser la main sur son buste permet la réalisation d'un vœu assurent ses fidèles. La «rock generation», elle, préfère se réunir autour du tombeau de John Morrison, l'animateur du groupe «The Doors».

La tombe de La Fontaine (on a volé le renard en bronze qui l'ornait) attire les amis des animaux. Les amoureux s'attardent devant le mausolée gothique d'Héloïse et d'Alfred, les amants du Moyen-Age. Par cars entiers, les touristes anglais débarquent devant la tombe d'Oscar Wilde que surmonte un gigantesque sphinx de granit. Plus récentes, les sépultures de la chanteuse Edith Piaf et celle de l'actrice Simone Signoret attirent, aussi, bien des visiteurs.

Plus d'un million de personnes ont été inhumées au Père-Lachaise. Parmi elles, que d'ombres illustres! Des écrivains et des poètes: Musset, Balzac, Alphonse Daudet, Proust, Apollinaire, Colette. Des musiciens: Chopin, Rossini, Bizet. Des peintres: Géricault, Ingres, Delacroix, Seurat, Modigliani. Des présidents de la République: Thiers, Félix Faure.

Certains événements tragiques en ont fait un haut lieu de l'Histoire. En mars 1814, les élèves de l'école Polytechnique s'y opposèrent, les armes à la main, à l'assaut des troupes russes après l'abdication de Napoléon. En 1871, les insurgés de la Commune y succombèrent sous les balles: plus d'un millier d'entre eux sont inhumés dans des fosses. Parmi eux, l'écrivain Jules Vallès et le



Le tombeau de Chopin, abondamment fleuri par des admirateurs anonymes.

poète J.-B. Clément, auteur du «Temps des cerises».

On peut opter pour l'itinéraire «révolutionnaire» qui conduit de la dernière demeure de Marie-Joseph Chénier, auteur du «Chant du départ», à celle d'Éléonore Duplay, la «fiandée» de Robespierre. Ou bien pour le circuit «napoléonien», avec les caveaux des maréchaux d'Empire: Murat, Suchet, Lefebvre; celui-ci est enterré avec sa femme, la fameuse Madame Sans-Gêne. Les belles qui passeront dans la vie de l'Empereur y ont leur place: Marie Walewska, Mlle Duchesnois, Melle George...

Lieu du souvenir, le Père-Lachaise est aussi un catalogue de styles d'art funéraire. Flamboyantes tombes gothiques, pompes caveaux haussmanniens ou humbles pierres tombales. Marbres rares, bronzes opulents ou fers forgés délicats. Les architectes et sculpteurs du siècle dernier ont signé certains monuments: Garnier, Guimard, Hittorf, Percier,

Viollet-le-Duc, pour les premiers; Dalou, David d'Angers, Prault, Rude pour les seconds, ont contribué à en faire un admirable musée en plein air.

Parfois insolites ou bizarres, les épitaphes intéressantes rempliraient un ouvrage. Retenons celle d'une veuve à la franchise sans fard, qui fait graver sur la tombe de l'époux disparu: «Attends-moi longtemps».

Si l'on en croit la rumeur, le cimetière-jardin ne serait pas qu'un lieu de sérénité. Sans parler des pilleurs de caveaux qui font de loin en loin parler d'eux, il servirait à la célébration de cultes inavouables. Nécrophiles amateurs de macabres cérémonies et adeptes de messes noires s'y adonneraient à d'étranges rituels, les nuits de pleine lune, sur certaines tombes servant d'autels. Une légende sans doute, qui contribue à entretenir le mystère de ce lieu magique et fascinant.

Philippe Chevalier

PASSEZ-MOI MON FRANCAIS

La rubrique de Flavja Romero.

Respiration

Egeria, amie et sœur, ave!

Ta lettre de la semaine dernière mérite bien plus qu'une réponse écrite. Elle impose le silence, la méditation.

Des sujets comme l'absolu, l'humilité, la fuite, touchent les cordes les plus sensibles de l'être. Il faut beaucoup de courage pour en parler, du fait qu'en parler signifie se regarder au miroir sans complaisance, sans coquetterie, mais sans non plus de fausses accusations, ni de victimisme. C'est évaluer sa vie, pour en étudier l'anatomie.

J'ai besoin de temps, d'une espèce de retraite en moi-même pour essayer d'arriver à accepter la réalité sans fausses illusions et sans détresse, pour essayer de rechercher dans les racines les plus profondes de mon être le germe de la maturité, qui devrait être acceptation sereine de ce que je suis et de ceux qui m'entourent.

Je recommencerai à l'écriture dès que j'aurai l'équilibre nécessaire pour le faire.

Accepte, je te prie, toute mon amitié.

Vale, Egeria!

Sans blague!

Aristote et les priorités de Bush

[Pour être bien conseillé, Bush, encore vice-président, entreprit de faire construire un ordinateur super-géant (baptisé Aristote) doté d'un système d'intelligence artificielle extrêmement perfectionné. Tout récemment mis en service, celui-ci avait déjà donné à Bush plus d'un conseil sensé.]

Bush, comme tout homme d'Etat bien organisé, avait établi ses propres objectifs, en fonction desquels il prenait ses décisions. Son premier objectif était d'être réélu à la présidence dans deux ans; son deuxième était d'augmenter l'avance de son pays comme puissance mondiale suprême en fomentant, s'il le fallait, des coups foudroyants contre tout prétendant actuel ou potentiel à ce titre. Il fallait donc réorganiser le monde de façon à consacrer la suprématie américaine absolue et à décourager toute tentative de «débordement» des prétendants au titre.

Pour être réélu, il fallait s'assurer le soutien des grands lobbies, mais aussi obtenir les suffrages du grand public. Très souvent, concilier ces deux exigences était extrêmement difficile et même contradictoire: comment par exemple s'assurer en même temps le soutien du lobby pétrolier (qui voulait à tout prix voir augmenter le prix des carburants) et la popularité d'un président auprès du large public, popularité qui baissait d'un «point» au moins avec chaque augmentation d'un «cent» du prix du bidon d'essence? Aristote, consulté sur ce point précis avait indiqué la méthode infallible et éprouvée dans plus d'une région du monde, entre autres assez récemment dans un lointain pays du Moyen-Orient.

En 1988 en effet, la monnaie nationale de ce pays, le dinar, était entrée dans une période d'effondrement. Alors qu'il s'échangeait avant cette crise à plus de trois dollars, ses cours chutaient de jour en jour: deux dollars et demi, deux dollars, un dollar et demi, etc. La Banque Centrale le laissa faire. Et lorsque le dinar ne fut plus échangé qu'à moins d'un dollar, elle décida d'intervenir «énergiquement» et fixa son cours à un dollar et demi! Le public fut alors extrêmement heureux de ce résultat spectaculaire et de la stabilité monétaire qui s'ensuivit. Le crédit de cette remontée

«remarquable» du cours du dinar fut mis à l'actif du nouveau gouverneur de la Banque Centrale, qui devint ainsi un héros national.

Pour en revenir au pétrole, il fallait donc augmenter ses cours à quatre vingt dollars ou plus le baril. Suite à l'intervention «énergique» de l'Administration américaine, sous la direction «personnelle» du président, les cours seraient ramenés à quarante ou cinquante dollars le baril seulement et la cote de popularité du président monterait en flèche.

Mais comment augmenter le prix du baril jusqu'à plus de quatre vingt dollars alors que tout récemment encore il se vendait pour moins de seize?

«Très simple M. le président, répondit Aristote: en augmentant la tension dans le Golfe et, si cela s'avérait insuffisant, en provoquant une petite guerre (pas mécanique du tout) mais dont les premiers effets seraient de mettre le feu à quelques puits de pétrole en Arabie Saoudite et au Koweït. Les grosses flammes rouges et les épaisses fumées noires des incendies du précieux carburant (que tout le monde pourra à loisir observer longuement et à maintes reprises sur son petit écran) feront sûrement «clamber» le prix du baril jusqu'au niveau désiré.

«Et comment arrêter une telle guerre une fois commencée? «Pour éviter tout danger, il faudrait s'entendre préalablement sur ses moindres détails avec Saddam. Pour l'opinion publique américaine et mondiale, la guerre devra être arrêtée pour «sauver le monde d'un désastre écologique certain» résultant de l'incendie des puits de pétrole et aussi «pour sauvegarder le patrimoine irremplaçable que représente le pétrole».

Mais comment s'entendre avec cette tête de bourrique?

«Pas compliqué: lorsqu'il y a un gâteau à partager, il n'est pas du tout difficile de s'entendre. Donnez lui simplement sa part. De toute façon, on trouvera sûrement, tôt ou tard le moyen de la lui faire recrachier!

Quant au lobby des fabricants de matériel militaire, Bush commençait à trouver difficile de les contenter, maintenant que la

guerre froide était terminée.

«Pas du tout, affirma Aristote. La guerre froide est finie, il s'agit maintenant de maintenir plusieurs points chauds, à condition que les pays concernés soient solvables, ou du moins qu'on puisse leur trouver des bailleurs de fonds (comme pour les Moujahidins afghans par exemple). Pas question donc de détruire la force de l'Irak comme le préconisent Israël et cette vieille sorcière hystérique des Iles (heureusement aujourd'hui à la retraite): il faut garder l'Irak comme épouvantail pour effrayer les pays riches de la région: on continuera ainsi à leur vendre des armes. De plus, pourquoi ne pas s'assurer le marché de l'Irak? Pourquoi ce pays n'exploiterait-il pas des F16 et des F15 au lieu des Mirage et des Mig? Pourquoi ne pas le doter de chars, à la place des T72 soviétiques? Et les fusées, pourquoi irait-il les chercher en Chine, en URSS et en France, alors que nous possédons tout une panoplie au moins aussi performante? Une fois l'Irak bien équipé, son riche voisin, l'Iran devra en faire autant et constituera lui aussi, à nouveau, un marché prospère et profitable.

«Mais où viendra se placer Israël dans cette course? Ce pays n'est pas solvable et n'a aucune chance de le devenir!

Une fois encore on en revient à la nécessité de faire la paix entre Israël et ses voisins. La course aux armements devra se poursuivre entre pays riches seulement. Les pays pauvres, Israël, le Bangladesh ou d'autres, devront se contenter d'accepter notre protection, ce qui augmentera notre influence auprès d'eux.

Mais comment empêcher les pays «solvables» d'acheter des armes ailleurs qu'aux Etats-Unis?

«Il faudrait pratiquer le dumping pour quelques années. De toute façon, produisant en gros et avec un taux de change du dollar aussi avantageux, nos coûts seront certainement inférieurs à ceux des concurrents. Dans deux ou trois ans, ils finiront tous par fermer boutique, et nous aurons alors le monopole du marché du matériel militaire.

«Avec tout ça, pensait Bush avec satisfaction, je pourrai

A L'AFFICHE

A petites gorgées

Au carrefour des cultures du café

Une très belle idée forme la structure de l'exposition photographique (au Centre Culturel Français jusqu'à la fin du mois) consacrée aux thèmes des cafés littéraires de Paris et des cafés de l'Orient.

En entrant (par un rideau en paquets de café) on pénètre dans un univers à deux rues.

Vu de l'intérieur, l'arrangement correspond à la direction des deux écritures: le français qui s'écrit de gauche à droite; l'arabe, à l'inverse.

Ainsi, la rue de gauche mène vers Paris, et celle de droite à Athènes, en passant par le Caire, Damas, Bagdad et Istanbul. C'est par Ma'an que la Jordanie est représentée.

A un moment donné, les deux rues se rejoignent. Mais selon que l'on commence par l'Orient ou par l'Occident, l'impression est totalement différente. Cheminant de Ma'an à Paris, on passera d'une rencontre avec toute une gamme de gens à des locaux présentant de grandes richesses architecturales où l'on ne croquera personne. La route menant le spectateur de Paris à Ma'an, en revanche, le transportera d'un univers esthétique figé qui l'aurait mis sur le carreau à un monde animé, l'invitant à participer.

Ces directions décrivent les approches des photographes. En France, la solitaire Bérangère Lomont s'est enflammée des aspects décoratifs des cafés de Paris, écartant la clientèle du contexte. Son travail — présentation bien photographiée et variée — se réfère aux lieux où les lettrés s'assemblent, mais il n'apporte rien sur l'ambiance créée par ces gens. Les autres (au nombre de dix), qui ont recueilli leurs clichés dans les divers coins du Moyen-Orient, ont préféré — sans négliger le décoratif — nous dévoiler les fonctions sociales des maisons de café.

Ce côté est infiniment plus riche et diversifié. Il nous révèle que nos photographes, par leurs choix de sujets, ont réussi à faire ressortir le café comme élément fondamental de la société, recherché dans tous les milieux. Patrick Lacombe ne s'est pas privé, en rencontrant à Istanbul un jeune vendeur ambulancier; et Françoise Journe s'est montrée reconnaissante à la vieille vendeuse au visage parcheminé au coin d'une rue du Caire quand elle lui a vendu une tasse.

Deux photos intéressantes. Un qualificatif qui peut s'appliquer au travail de l'ensemble de cette exposition modeste, dont on peut aussi dire qu'elle témoigne d'un œil aventureux. C'est à Bagdad, au café de la mosquée des Cordonniers, que Adil al-Tai a reconnu l'élément religieux se mêlant de façon naturelle au séculier. Au portail d'une mosquée, où un esprit entrepreneur a dressé des tables et des tabourets, il a photographié un homme à l'aspect très digne, tirant sur son narghileh, et contemplant son café comme s'il contenait ses pensées religieuses les plus profondes.

C'est justement dans ce sens que l'architecture des cafés de cette partie de l'exposition nous rapproche des gens. Elle nous invite à les reconnaître dans les lieux qui leurs sont précieux. Nino Ciccarone trouvera un de ces lieux en photographiant à Doha des dégustateurs sous une immense tente brodée de motifs variés; et Nicos Avramides en trouve un deuxième — beaucoup plus simple — dans un café trottoir de Limassol, qui s'appelle «A la rencontre des amis».

Nos photographes ne sont-ils que grégaires, cherchant à se mêler aux gens de la rue? Philippe Bec, qui s'est heurté dans l'Oasis de Ma'an à une dimension folklorique inattendue, a pris une autre direction. Embarqué par le scintillement bric-à-brac tombant en cascade du plafond du café Khouiri, dissimulant tables et chaises comme un rideau de brume, il s'est cru à l'entrée de la caverne d'Ali Baba, et a pris un moment pour enregistrer le phénomène. Ainsi d'ailleurs que Krzysztof Pruszkowski, qui, fasciné par un miroitement sur la devanture du café qu'il cherchait — le café Pastroudis — à l'idée de surimposer sur le cliché des installations de ce café littéraire légendaire d'Alexandrie, l'image de la rue Fouad, comme s'il s'agissait d'un montage naturel.

Même si l'exposition des cafés de l'Orient ne se veut pas toujours littéraire, elle nous livre plus sur ce sujet que le travail de la solitaire Bérangère Lomont. Le contenu du café de Qalamun à Damas, autour duquel, retenant leur haleine, les gens se sont regroupés, est une évocation de Mohammed Roumi; c'est aussi Roumi qui a capturé au café Toledo de Homs l'ambiance de l'avant-garde: peintres, poètes et penseurs.

Ce sont ces photos — ainsi que celles rappelant les cafés de Pierre Loti (Lacombe) et de Lawrence Durrell (Pruszkowski) — qui mettent en évidence, par contraste, les insuffisances dans le travail de Lomont, où l'élément littéraire est tout simplement introuvable. Belle architecture! Piètre consolation! Qu'est-ce qu'un café sans sa clientèle? Voudrait-on s'imaginer ses auteurs préférés, le formalisme des photos ne le permet guère. On ne voit même pas une tasse de café pour s'inspirer. Pas surprenant dans ces conditions désertiques que ces scènes parisiennes ne fassent ni chaud ni froid!

Il nous reste heureusement Noël Favrelière, le directeur du Centre Culturel Français et sa conférence (ce dimanche à 18h), illustrée de diapositives. Il parlera du café, de sa culture à sa consommation. Espérons qu'il remplacera par ses anecdotes les tables vides de Bérangère Lomont. Il y a des chances, puisqu'il propose aussi à l'assistance un petit noir à la bédoine, et, tout en le sirotant, de causer un peu.

Sami Kamal

TELEVISION

DIMANCHE

17h30 - «La menteuse». Pièce de théâtre.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Carnet de notes. Extraits de musique classique.

LUNDI

18h00 - L'Oiseau des mers. Dessin animé.
18h10 - Denver le dernier dinosaure. Dessin animé.
18h30 - Aventure Voyage. Magazine de l'aventure.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Magazine sportif hebdomadaire.

MARDI

18h00 - «L'art pour la vie».
18h10 - L'école des fans. Des enfants interprètent le répertoire d'un chanteur célèbre, sous la houlette de Jacques Martin.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - «Aujourd'hui en Jordanie». Magazine local préparé et présenté par Saleh Madi.

MERCREDI

18h00 - «L'obsédé» épisode de la série documentaire «Destination Santé».
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Sélection de variétés françaises.

JEUDI

18h00 - L'Oiseau des mers. Dessin animé.
18h10 - Snorky. Dessin animé.
18h30 - Splendeur sauvage. Documentaire sur la vie des animaux.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Reportage d'actualité.

VENREDI

17h30 - «Les cinq dernières minutes». Série policière française.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Histoire de l'art. Série documentaire.

SAMEDI

18h00 - Les clés de Fort Boyard. Copie au trésor exigeant des candidats courage physique et bonne culture générale.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Aujourd'hui en France. Magazine culturel français.

CINEMA

Avenir. Dans le cadre du mois du court métrage, le CCF présente une série de sept petits films d'animation et de recherche: «Invités», «Questions de formes», «Spirale», entre autres titres.

On ne sait pas toujours que de nombreux grands cinéastes, tels que Louis Malle ou François Truffaut, ont souvent réalisé avec bonheur des courts métrages au cours de leur carrière. Souvent ignorés du public ces films constituent pour beaucoup d'entre eux de véritables joyaux du septième art. Centre Culturel Français, le lundi 17 décembre à 20h.

Lang. Dans le cadre du festival Fritz Lang, présenté par Sami Kamal, deux films du grand cinéaste expressionniste allemand sont proposés cette semaine: la deuxième partie des «Nibelungen» et, en vidéo, un des Westerns de sa période américaine, «Le retour de Frank James». Institut Goethe le dimanche 16 à 20h pour le premier et le samedi 22 à 20h pour le second.

réaliser mes deux objectifs prioritaires: en m'assurant l'appui des lobbies du pétrole et des fabricants de matériel militaire, j'aurai le financement et le soutien médiatique nécessaires pour ma prochaine campagne présidentielle; en jouant à la «petite guerre» je finirai par obtenir l'appui du public et peut-être, pourquoi pas, le prix Nobel de la Paix (que j'aurai probablement à partager avec Saddam). Mieux, lorsque les usines d'armement se mettront à tourner à plein, le chômage diminuera aux Etats-Unis et la situation économique s'assainira, ce qui me vaudra au moins une dizaine de points d'avance sur n'importe quel autre candidat et me conduira en triomphe à la Maison Blanche. Par ailleurs, augmenter les prix du pétrole commencera à créer des problèmes économiques aux pays de l'Europe et au Japon; les faire sortir du marché des ventes d'armes les plongera certainement dans le marasme économique, ce qui les empêchera, et pour longtemps, de songer à contester notre suprématie.

Avant de prendre congé d'Aristote, Bush, fier de lui-même, demanda: «A ma place, ne croyez-vous pas que tout président des Etats-Unis se serait fixé des objectifs identiques à ceux que je me suis fixés?»

«La plupart, M. le président, mais pas tous. Washington, Lincoln ou même Wilson ne l'auraient certainement pas fait. Pour ces hommes qui ont marqué l'Histoire, les objectifs auraient été d'instaurer un ordre mondial dans lequel régnerait la paix et la justice et non des formes viles d'asservissement et d'exploitation des peuples. Maintenant que vous m'avez posé la question, je vous conseille de cesser de jouer au vulgaire politicien et d'essayer de devenir un grand homme, un président qui a compris l'Histoire, qui œuvre dans son sens et dont elle se souviendra, quitte à ne séjourner encore que deux ans à la Maison Blanche!

Bush abasourdi par cette «bouche» inattendue avait envie de demander immédiatement des explications à cet impertinent Aristote, mais il avait malheureusement rendez-vous avec le président du lobby des constructeurs automobiles...

Sabri Farah

NCR rejects ATT's \$6b hostile bid

NEW YORK (R) — NCR Corp Friday rejected American Telephone and Telegraph Co's \$6.12 billion hostile takeover offer as "grossly inadequate," setting the stage for a possible battle for control of the fifth-largest U.S. computer company.

In rejecting a \$90 a share offer launched Dec. 2, NCR said it would continue to move forward with its business plans. "Clearly ATT is attempting to move forward with its business plans. Clearly ATT is attempting for its own purposes to take advantage of NCR's artificially and temporarily depressed stock price," NCR Chairman Charles E. Exley said in a statement.

American Telephone and Telegraph (ATT) has tried to build a computer business on its own for years and has lost billions of dollars in the attempt. NCR has said it would consider talks if ATT dug deeper into its pockets and bid \$125 a share or more, which ATT has said is unacceptable.

New York-based ATT said it was "very disappointed" by the rejection and would weigh its options, adding that it remains "determined to conclude the merger with NCR."

The offer for NCR is ATT's largest merger bid and the first hostile tender offer in the telephone giant's history. It has expressed a willingness to consider all aspects of the deal, including price, if NCR agrees to negotiate.

NCR's rejection sets the stage for ATT possibly to launch a proxy battle to unseat the NCR board. Control of the board is needed to remove anti-takeover measures which would make a takeover prohibitively expensive.

BBC to close Listener, scrap radio expansion to save money

LONDON (R) — The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) said Thursday it was closing the long-running Listener magazine and dropping plans to extend its radio network as part of an economy drive.

The decision to close the Listener after more than 60 years of publication was made because of falling readership and losses of around £1 million (\$1.95 million) a year.

The BBC's partner in the joint venture publishing the weekly magazine, Britain's Independent Television network, has already said it would pull out next year.

The BBC also said it was scrapping plans for two new local radio stations in Britain, with the loss of 35 jobs, to save

around £3 million (\$5.9 million).

The publicly funded corporation announced in January that it was aiming to cut its annual budget by £75 million (\$146 million) within the next three years. The company's income from television licence fees is £1.17 billion (\$2.28 billion) a year, a BBC spokesman said.

The Listener was founded in 1929 to cover broadcasting and the arts and flourished as a companion to radio programmes.

Its appeal faded in the television age, with readership slumping from a peak of 153,000 in 1948 to less than 17,000. The magazine, which has a staff of 20, will close at the end of January.

Mubarak recommends 1,000-day programme

CAIRO (R) — President Hosni Mubarak opened Egypt's new parliament on Saturday, urging Iraq to respond to peace efforts and politicians to galvanise the economy in three years.

He called on the newly-elected assembly and the Shura Council, a consultative upper house, to work for economic reform.

"I propose... research on an integrated project which could be called the 1,000-day project to liberate the Egyptian economy," Mubarak said.

He did not spell out what he envisaged, but said red tape had to be abolished to encourage investment and rekindle confidence.

Repeating an old theme, he also urged Egyptians to have fewer babies.

Egypt, the most populous Arab state, has sent troops to the multinational force ranged against the Iraqis in Saudi Arabia. Although the Kuwait crisis has forced thousands of Egyptian workers to return home, participation in the force has won Egypt relief on some \$14 billion in debts to Washington and several anti-Iraqi Arab states.

Mubarak told parliament there were signs other friendly countries would follow suit in the next few months.

He said Egypt's \$7 billion military debt to the United States would have cost a total of \$34 billion in repayments and interest if Washington had not written it off.

Inflation in Britain declines

LONDON (R) — Britain's inflation rate fell to 9.7 per cent in November from an eight-year high of 10.9 per cent the previous month, the government announced Friday. Officials said it had now peaked.

The decline, the biggest monthly drop in four years, offered some solace to Prime Minister John Major after a bleak week of economic statistics which confirmed Britain is now in the grip of recession with unemployment rising fast.

But economists said the fall in the inflation rate — still higher than many of Britain's European partners — was not enough to tempt the government into relaxing its tight monetary squeeze and cutting interest rates.

"Inflation has now peaked, the treasury said in a statement, adding: "... provided oil prices remain around recent levels inflation will fall sharply through next year."

Opposition parties were unimpressed, however. They described the figure as cosmetic and accusing the government of mismanagement.

A welter of economic statistics released along with inflation Friday showed British manufacturing output fell by 2.4 per cent in the three months to October.

"This is stark confirmation that the economy is moving into a full-blown recession," said Keith Skeoch, economist at brokers James Capel.

Despite the drop in inflation, it is unlikely Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont will ease interest rates which have pinched industry and left consumers, particularly mortgage holders, with less to spend.

Market confidence in silver wanes

LONDON (R) — Silver was fixed at a 15-year low of 396.4 cents an ounce in London Friday, prompting bullion analysts to conclude that market confidence in the metal has been eroded and odds were heavily against any quick recovery.

Silver prices have come under selling pressure because of declining investor interest, a world glut and concern that deepening recession would slash industrial demand for the metal.

"Technically it looks awful now that the magic 15-year support has been broken," Andrew Smith, precious metal analyst at UBS Phillips and Drew in London, said.

The metal, which was fixed in London Thursday at 401.25 cents, could now touch, or tumble below, an historic low of 383 cents in January 1976.

Last year's average price was 550 cents an ounce on a spot market basis, while the nine-month figure for 1990 was 502 cents.

Smith said the latest bout of selling was due to what he described as technical rather than fundamental market factors.

"To cite the old recessionary fears would be after-the-event rationalisation. The market has been thin and people have been plying the gold-silver ratio," he said.

"Silver prices will erode gently, sideways and down to 380-390. I don't believe in a free fall theory," said Ted Arnold, precious metals analyst at Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith Inc.

Speculators had been expecting the gold-silver price ratio, recently around a record high of 90 to one, to return to below that level, Smith said. "When it didn't do that, they dumped

silver." Prices have come under pressure from so-called ratio trading, where U.S. professionals have been buying gold and selling silver, since the beginning of the week.

One major factor has been silver's weak performance since peace initiatives emerged in the Gulf.

Peace, while generally creating selling pressure for gold, was expected to boost silver on the grounds that lower oil prices would generate better demand for silver from the photographic and solder industries.

The photographic industry, which uses silver to make black and white film, consumes about 45 per cent of all silver mined.

This coincided with a shift in U.S. expectations of a short and mild recession to a longer, more prolonged economic downturn.

With supplies increasing and demand slowing down, silver was likely to behave "like water on sand... it tends to erode away, it doesn't wash the entire beach away but over the years it takes away some of it," Arnold said.

Silver output is not particularly sensitive to price movements as the metal is mostly a by-product of gold and base metal smelting. About 63 per cent of the silver mined worldwide is estimated to be such a by-product, making production cost hard to estimate.

"In accounting terms silver is almost a free good so long as the price is above zero, it will be mined," Smith said.

Some production cuts by primary silver producers would not bring about a significant easing of oversupply, he added. Heavily indebted Mexico and Peru are big primary producers.

Unpopular Canadian tax becomes law

OTTAWA (R) — A new Canadian tax on practically everything from piano lessons to sending a fax became law Friday and pushed Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and his conservatives close to rock-bottom in opinion polls.

The seven per cent goods and services tax (GST) won final approval late Thursday in the senate, the upper chamber of parliament, despite an opposition filibuster that lasted weeks.

The opposition Liberals, citing polls that up to 80 per cent of Canadians do not want a new tax, blew kazooes and read passages from the Bible and other works in a fruitless attempt to prevent a vote.

The Conservative government is due to institute the tax Jan. 1,

and it is expected to be a night-mare to implement.

The Canadian chamber of commerce estimates that between 300,000 and 400,000 small businesses have yet to register for the new tax and believe many are simply not ready to use the sophisticated computer systems needed to collect it.

Vilified as a crib-to-coffins tax, the new levy will be charged on just about all goods except food as well as on piano lessons, lawyers' fees and even sending a fax.

The tax will be in addition to provincial sales taxes levied in nine of Canada's 10 provinces.

Mulroney's Conservatives have slipped close rock bottom in the polls since plans for the tax were announced and are

supported by only 15 per cent of decided voters. Mulroney must call an election in less than three years.

The Toronto Star ran an editorial cartoon Friday with Mulroney depicted as a menacing, fang-toothed vampire. The caption read: "I want to suck your wallet."

Government and many business leaders maintain that the tax will boost the economy because it replaces a narrow applied 13.5 per cent manufacturing sales tax which tended to make Canadian products uncompetitive with imports.

"The GST is a fair and more progressive tax than the antiquated, 73-year-old manufacturers' sales tax it replaces," the

Globe and Mail of Toronto said, in an editorial.

The tax is expected to raise about 20.8 billion Canadian dollars (\$17.7 billion) in its first year and 10 per cent of that will be sent as rebates to low-income people.

The government says the tax is basically revenue-neutral because it replaces an existing tax and because of the rebate system. But critics say it could be used to raise billions of dollars and help the government get its runaway spending deficit under control.

Economists say the tax will boost inflation and some analysts worry it will further weaken an economy that slipped into recession earlier this year.

U.S. wholesale inflation stays strong

WASHINGTON (R) — Wholesale inflation remained unexpectedly strong in November despite new evidence the U.S. economy is in recession, government reports showed Friday.

The Labour Department reported that the producer price index (PPI), a measure of wholesale inflation, rose an unexpectedly strong 0.5 per cent after climbing 1.1 per cent and 1.6 per cent in the prior months due to higher oil prices.

The data muddled prospects that the Federal Reserve central bank, committed to taming inflation, will lower interest rates quickly to arrest a severe economic downturn.

Factory production fell 1.7 per

cent, its sharpest decline since January 1982, the middle of the last recession, the Federal Reserve Board said.

"This is unambiguous evidence we are going into a deeper recession than we initially anticipated," said Gordon Richards, economist at the National Association of Manufacturers.

Economists are virtually unanimous that the U.S. is in for six months of declining economic activity, but most expect a mid-1991 rebound from recession.

Cuts in car manufacturing plants accounted for about half the November drop in industrial production figures, but every major factory sector recorded declining output. Usage of fac-

tory capacity also slumped to 80.9 per cent from 82.4 per cent in October, its lowest rate since May 1987.

Shrinking industrial production, a sign of weak demand, usually brings down prices. But the producer price index so far has failed to respond.

Subtracting the volatile food and energy figures from the index did not help. The index for the core wholesale inflationary rate was up 0.5 per cent in November, compared with an unchanged October rate, the department said.

Economists had expected a 0.1 per cent PPI advance, tempered by cheaper oil, and a 0.2 per cent rise excluding food and energy prices.

But analysts saw cause for optimism. "These big increases are not sustainable," said Alan Levenson, director of financial services at the Wafa Group.

Climbing unemployment, stagnant retail sales and plant shutdowns all hamper producers' ability to continue passing on higher costs to buyers, analysts said.

Already these damping pressures are showing in the PPI. About half of the November gain in prices that producers charged retail and wholesale outlets for finished goods was accounted for by one-time jumps in car and tobacco prices, they said. These items rose by a seasonally adjusted 3.8 per cent and 3.7 per cent rate, respectively.

Sofia halts petrol sales nationwide

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria Friday banned petrol sales nationwide for seven days, to save dwindling supplies for vital food deliveries, public transport and emergency services.

National radio, quoting the state company Petrol, said all sales to the public would stop until Dec. 20.

Supplies were already rationed to 30 litres a month. Shortages have been most acute in Sofia, the capital, where a sales ban is already in effect.

Bulgarians face winter with basic foods running out, rationed or over-priced on the black market — and without an effective government.

Gorbachev bans direct trading among republics

MOSCOW (R) — President Mikhail Gorbachev Friday virtually banned the Soviet republics and enterprises from direct trading with one another, and with foreign partners.

He ruled that their first duty was to supply the centralised Soviet state.

In a decree Gorbachev banned all individual deals for 1991 that could damage existing economic ties and he said enterprises should immediately sign contracts for supplying the state.

The restriction applied to individual agreements with foreign countries as well as to barter deals.

Gorbachev's decree "to prevent disruption" was aimed at

trying to restore order to a deteriorating economy by returning power to the central authorities.

Production is slumping across the country and worsening distribution links are leading to a critical shortage of basic goods.

Most of the 15 republics, eager to benefit from their own resources, are exerting increased power over their own affairs, challenging Moscow's traditional centralised control on industry.

Republics and factories are increasingly signing contracts with one another instead of agreeing to sell goods to the state at low prices. This has disrupted long-established supply lines and threatened to bring many industries to a standstill.

At a local level, factories are carrying out barter deals among themselves — for example by trading machinery for food.

The decree is another sign that reformist Gorbachev, under intense pressure to halt a political and economic downward slide, has slowly been moving back towards the right.

"Completion of contracts for 1991 is lagging behind seriously, which is putting all branches of industry into a critical position," the decree said.

TASS news agency Friday said shortages of raw materials were crippling production of household goods in the southwestern republic of Moldova.

Gorbachev said the Soviet government would soon sign agreements to import raw materials and ensure that industrial output next year was maintained.

The imports will be directed at the food and chemical sectors and light industry.

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Saturday, December 15, 1990
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EC scraps ban on new investments in S. Africa

ANC resolves unanimously to maintain Pretoria sanctions

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The African National Congress (ANC) resolved Saturday to continue pressing the world to apply strict sanctions against South Africa.

The unanimous resolution by the ANC's national conference to maintain the economic stranglehold on South Africa appeared to contradict a statement by ANC President Oliver Tambo Friday that sanctions should be reassessed.

"We... resolve that the existing sanctions package be maintained," the conference declared to thunderous applause from 1,600 delegates and hundreds of observers.

The ANC appealed to the U.S. Congress and the European Community (EC), holding a summit in Rome this weekend with sanctions on the agenda, to postpone any consideration of lifting the monetary, trade and cultural embargo on South Africa.

The main black movement fighting white rule said all international organisations should delay any decisions on sanctions "until the ANC and all democratic formations inside our country... initiate discussions with them on the issues."

The EC, which comprises the bulk of South Africa's trading partners, is debating whether to lift some sanctions in recognition of President F.W. de Klerk's programme of apartheid reform.

The ANC said it could not endorse the lifting of sanctions while the basic institutions of apartheid were still in place and while the South African government continued to use violence and repression.

The resolution said the ANC was alarmed over orchestrated violence against defenceless citizens and the continuing application of strict security laws.

Peter Mokaba, radical ANC youth leader, told Reuters: "The people are very angry with the pace of reform. The delegates are characterised by militancy."

ANC education chief Raymond Suttner said the resolution accurately reflected the uncompromising mood of the conference, which adopted the motion behind closed doors.

"The feeling of this conference is that De Klerk needs to be rewarded with mass action and sanctions."

In a reference to Tambo's speech at Friday's opening of the first ANC session held inside the

country for 30 years, he said the call for a sanctions review was a sign of the ANC's willingness to discuss the issue.

"Yesterday, Tambo was trying to indicate political openness (by proposing the review). But today he himself proposed the resolution and there was spontaneous applause," Suttner said.

In Rome, EC leaders agreed Saturday to scrap the EC's ban on new investments in South Africa, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said.

The investment ban is the first of the EC's sanctions to be lifted in recognition of the reforms introduced by President F.W. de Klerk to abolish apartheid.

Kohl told a news conference that the EC would lift all its sanctions against South Africa when Pretoria released all political prisoners and repealed key legislation on racial segregation.

"Prior to that, and primarily to combat unemployment, the sanction on new investment will be lifted as an act of goodwill from our side," he said.

"As an important signal for South Africa, we have raised the prospect of an easing of sanctions introduced in 1986 when the abolition of important laws,

already announced, and the release of all political prisoners has taken place," Kohl said.

Diplomats said Kohl was referring to the Land Act and the Group Areas Act.

"This declaration expressly honours the progress made in talks between the South African government and the African National Congress," Kohl said.

German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher said the lifting of the ban would reward De Klerk for legalising the African National Congress (ANC), freeing its deputy leader Nelson Mandela and allowing its President Oliver Tambo to end years in exile.

Asked if Germany had taken the lead in pressing for the lifting of sanctions, Kohl replied: "There was a unanimous decision."

In Johannesburg, a spokesman for the ANC said the EC decision was against ANC interests.

But he said he was not disappointed.

"If we were disappointed none of us would be in this struggle. We have lived with these things for many years. There is no place for disappointment in our movement," he said.

Cheney may cancel A-12 bomber programme

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney announced Friday he will cancel the navy's troubled A-12 bomber programme in three weeks unless the navy can give him a good reason to keep it.

"The A-12 programme is in serious trouble," Cheney said in a memorandum to Navy Secretary Lawrence Garrett, portions of which the Defence Department made public.

The A-12 is designed to replace the A-6, which flies from aircraft carriers.

"The apparent schedule slippage, cost growth and management deficiencies in this programme are intolerable," Cheney wrote.

Cheney told Garrett to show cause by Jan. 4 why the programme should not be terminated.

The action followed by two days the resignation of Defence Department procurement chief John Betti, who was criticised early this week by the Pentagon inspector general for failing to pursue problems with the A-12.

Cheney's memo was hailed immediately by House Government Operations Committee Chairman John Conyers, a Michigan Democrat whose committee has conducted hearings on the matter.

"I congratulate secretary Cheney for his actions on the A-12," Conyers said. "We still need to address the costly old boys' network in the whole \$160-billion procurement system."

The government is investigating potential criminal wrongdoing in connection with cost overruns and schedule delays in the programme, the Washington Post reported earlier this week.

Meanwhile the U.S. army said Friday it is cancelling development of the planned FOG-M missile designed to destroy tanks,

Shatalin blames distribution for food shortages

MOSCOW (AP) — Soviet food shortages are due entirely to distribution problems and economic disarray, not a lack of food, a presidential adviser said Friday. He added that emergency steps are needed to resolve the crisis.

Foreign countries continued to ship tons of humanitarian aid to the Soviet Union, however. And at a summit meeting in Rome, the European Community (EC) Friday approved \$1 billion in emergency aid to help the Soviet economy.

The aid also is meant to bolster President Mikhail Gorbachev, who has been attacked by hardliners and radicals during the nation's economic and political turmoil.

Soviet ports and borders have been swamped by the humanitarian shipments. More than 1.6 million metric tons of imported goods were waiting at ports and about 7,000 railcars were waiting at border stations.

But Stanislav Shatalin, the presidential economic adviser, said in an interview that there was no shortage of food in the Soviet Union.

"Hunger is not an issue. There is enough food," said Shatalin. "The issue is how to find it and distribute it so that it doesn't get into the hands of the mafia, saboteurs and corrupted elements."

Black marketeers have pilfered state supplies, and the practice is fuelled by heavy-handed economic control that makes it more profitable for farmers to sell their products through unofficial channels.

Friday's Moskovskaya Pravda reported that the KGB secret police, searching Moscow warehouses for hidden food, found in one shop nearly 2 metric tons of meat, 750 cans of instant coffee and 880 pounds of butter.

The government says deliveries of most products are running 15 per cent to 11 per cent below 1989 levels, mostly due to pilfering and profiteering.

Shatalin said efforts toward economic and political change are inextricably linked with the food problem. But in the course of working out reforms, "there were things we didn't know how to do, and couldn't do, and a difficult situation emerged. And these have to be resolved by emergency measures."

Shatalin did not say what emergency measures he had in mind.

But the term has been used in recent weeks to mean a severe crackdown on black marketeers blamed for the disappearance of food from state-run stores in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities as winter approaches.

Gorbachev ordered the KGB and other law enforcement bodies to halt pilfering, and government commissions have been formed to monitor the problem and direct the distribution of food. Workers' committees and other informal groups also are tracking food on the way to its destination, Shatalin said.

But the heart of the problem remains land ownership and the chance to produce food profitably, he said. Individuals must be given farmland from the state-owned farms and from collective farms that now can reserve only some of their product for private use.

Communist chief calls for Soviet Salvation Front

MOSCOW (R) — Ivan Polozkov, recognised leader of Soviet Communist hardliners, called Saturday for the formation of a "union for the salvation of the fatherland" to prevent creeping capitalism.

Polozkov, Communist Party chief for the Russian Federation, the biggest Soviet republic, issued his call on the eve of a key session of the country's prime legislature expected to approve wider powers for President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The new movement, he said in the main Communist daily Pravda, should "unite patriotic and democratic forces... to establish popular control over the process of social transformation and prevent a transition to a market system behind the backs of the workers."

Polozkov, echoing criticism of Gorbachev voiced at a session of the Soviet party's policy-setting Central Committee last Monday, said reforms had allowed "anti-Soviet and anti-Socialist elements" to take power in many parts of the country.

His call for a new organisation to oppose radicals followed a similar appeal this month by a shadowy "centrist bloc" for the removal of Gorbachev and the establishment of a "national salvation front" to run the country.

Polozkov charged that radicals — the term now widely used for reformers seeking a total change in the Soviet system — had seized control of most of the media, where even once-official organs now take a strongly independent line.

"Modern capitalism of the Western type is being widely advertised to Soviet people, but in fact the way is being opened to the domination of our domestic criminal bourgeoisie and the establishment of the rule of the mafia," Polozkov said.

His article, which made no mention of food and medical aid from Western countries now pouring into the Soviet Union, appeared amid a growing debate on whether Gorbachev himself is moving to the right.

Radicals say they fear a political crackdown under cover of measures to deal with economic

chaos which has brought a major disruption of food deliveries.

Senior foreign diplomats in Moscow say they do not expect broad-scale action against radicals or the elected governments in several Soviet republics which are seeking either to secede from the union or achieve effective independence.

But the diplomats say they have been alarmed by signals that the still-Communist KGB and army leadership would like to take a stronger hand and by Gorbachev's replacement of a liberal interior minister by a hardliner.

Radicals — including the leaders of Baltic Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and former political prisoners who are now deputies to the Russian Federation parliament — say they are worried that Gorbachev wants his new powers to establish authoritarian rule.

Alarm in Latvia that some action might be under study in Moscow to limit the powers of the republic's government and parliament has been fed by a series of calls published by Pravda for "order" to be restored.

Latvia and Estonia are to send observer delegations to the session of the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies opening in the Kremlin Monday, arguing that if they leave their seats empty their views could be distorted.

Lithuania, where the native population is in the overwhelming majority, decided Friday not to attend the congress but President Vytautas Landsbergis sent a message wishing it success in "strengthening democracy."

Gorbachev has made clear that he sees his priority as preventing a break-up of the country and has offered a new union treaty giving republics wider freedoms. But many of the republics say it is not enough and want control over their own resources.

In a bid to prevent erosion of Moscow's control over regional economies, Gorbachev issued a decree Friday barring republics and individual enterprises from signing direct contracts with each other or with foreign partners.

Khaleda Zia prepares for Bangladesh elections

DHAKA (R) — The widow of an assassinated Bangladeshi leader told supporters Saturday to start working for elections to restore democracy following the downfall of President Hussain Mohammad Ershad.

"Unofficially the campaign has begun," Begum Khaleda Zia, leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), said at a student rally just one day after acting President Shahabuddin Ahmad set March 2 as the date for parliamentary polls.

Khaleda said the nation was grateful to the students who spearheaded the movement to oust Ershad, who resigned on Dec. 4 after weeks of strikes, demonstrations and street clashes in which at least 80 people were killed.

She urged them to return to their studies and said fighting poverty and illiteracy in one of the world's least developed countries would be a priority of a BNP government.

Many people carried pictures of her husband, Ziaur Rahman, who ruled for six years until he was shot by soldiers in 1981.

Sheikh Hasina, daughter of

the country's first president, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was also assassinated, was due to address her supporters of her Awami League later Saturday.

The two women have been uneasy allies in the fight to bring down Ershad, the 60-year-old general who seized power in 1982 and crushed many attempts to drive him out.

He held parliamentary elections in 1988 but the main opposition parties boycotted them as a sham.

A senior BNP member said renewed rivalry in the upcoming campaign could damage Bangladesh even as it rejoiced in the end of dictatorship.

"We must forget about party divisions," one-time Finance Minister Saifur Rahman told Reuters. "We need broad more than ballots."

The economy was on the verge of collapse and production had all but ground to a halt, he said.

"Too many expectations have been raised. Everybody will want their share and it will be impossible to meet every interest."

Tanks out as crowds try to raid Albania Communist Party office

VIENNA (R) — Army tanks enforced an uneasy peace in Albania's main industrial city of Elbasan Saturday after anti-Communist protesters tried to storm the local Communist Party headquarters. Albanian journalists said.

Six policemen were reported injured, two seriously, in a series of city clashes Friday as political violence spread in Albania. Europe's last bastion of old-style communism.

They were attacked by stone-throwing crowds, the Albanian news agency (ATA) said in the first report of injuries in Elbasan, 53 kilometres south of Tirana.

ATA said demonstrators in Elbasan and the sea port of Durres smashed shop windows, plundered stores and set fire to cars. An undisclosed number of people were arrested.

Rampaging protesters also tried to attack Elbasan's regional Communist Party offices, but were checked by security forces.

Albanian journalists, speaking by telephone from Tirana Friday, said tanks had been moved into Elbasan to quell the dis-

orders. "Six persons from the forces of order were wounded by stones. Among a police commissar and a policeman are in hospital," ATA said in its report, adding several "thieves and wrong-doers" had been arrested.

The agency added that police and government demonstrators in Durres Friday after protesters smashed several shop windows.

Violent protests have swept the small Balkan state, the last stronghold of Stalinist rule in Europe, in a week that saw the birth of its first independent political party for 45 years.

After decades of headline, one-party rule, Albania's Communists bowed to popular pressure and dumped steadfast opposition to a multi-party system.

Friday's violence in Elbasan and Durres came just a day after troops and police quelled a riot in the northern city of Shkoder. Official media said 10 people were injured and 30 were arrested in Shkoder.

Roh: Gorbachev will work for Korean reunification

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has promised to take all the steps within his power to work towards the reunification of Korea, South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo said Saturday.

"President Gorbachev said it was necessary to be patient and carry on dialogue between North and South and create an atmosphere of mutual trust," Roh told a news conference.

"Such an atmosphere would allow for creation of concrete ways leading to reunification. We were in full agreement. And President Gorbachev said that in this connection: 'I will do everything that is possible within my power.'"

Roh's visit, which takes place less than three months after the two countries established diplomatic relations, was crowned Friday by a declaration committing both countries to working

towards eventual reunification. The establishment of ties ended four decades of hostility since before the 1950-53 Korean War during which Moscow armed the Communist North.

Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze told his South Korean counterpart Choi Ho-Jong that Moscow wanted to contribute to a settlement of the conflict but also wished to maintain its traditional strong ties with the Communist North.

"We want to keep the good relations and broaden cooperation between the Soviet Union and (North Korea), but we also want to develop relations with the South," Shevardnadze's spokesman Vitaly Churkin quoted him as saying.

"We want to contribute to improving the situation on the Korean peninsula and help realise the dream held by both North and South."

Haiti election campaign closes on peaceful note

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — The campaign for the country's first democratically elected president came to a close early Saturday after about 10,000 supporters of the Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a leftist priest regarded as the frontrunner, held a final rally.

The campaign leading up to Sunday's election has been relatively peaceful, though seven people died at an Aristide rally last week. Aristide has blamed the attack on a supporter of the ousted Duvalier family regime who promises to keep the priest from becoming president.

Hundreds of international monitors prepared to watch the balloting.

The election is to end decades of repressive rule and install its

first democratically elected president.

Haiti's last attempt to hold democratic elections, on Nov. 29, 1987, collapsed when assassins supported by the army shot and hacked to death at least 31 people at polling stations and in the streets.

This time, the army has pledged to provide security, but sympathisers of the ousted Duvalier dictatorship are opposed to a transition to democracy. Several hundred international observers are on hand to monitor the balloting, along with 64 unarmed U.N. military advisers.

The election campaign by law came to a close at midnight Friday after the peaceful rally attended by about 10,000 Aristide supporters.

Angola, UNITA reach tentative agreement

WASHINGTON (AP) — Anti-Communist guerrillas have reached tentative agreement with the Marxist government of Angola on a plan to end 15 years of civil war, rebel leader Jonas Savimbi said Friday.

At a lengthy session Thursday under the auspices of the United States, Soviet Union and Portugal, the warring sides agreed to set a date for free elections and then immediately sign a ceasefire, Savimbi told reporters.

The breakthrough in the tortuous peace efforts followed a flurry of Washington meetings this week, including an unprecedented session between Savimbi and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. Savimbi, who until now had been vilified by the Kremlin as an anti-Communist menace, also met with President George Bush Thursday.

Washington and Moscow have been pressing their allies in Angola to stop the fighting, which has killed more than 300,000 people and left the mineral-rich country in ruin.

The United States has shipped the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, or UNITA, rebels as much as \$50 million in weapons every year since 1986. The Soviets have given the Angolan government as much as \$800 million annually, U.S. officials say.

Under the proposed agreement reached Thursday, both sides would stop sending weapons once a ceasefire is signed, U.S. officials said.

Testimony ends at Mendes murder trial in Brazil

XAPURI, Brazil (AP) — The defence and prosecution prepared their final arguments Saturday in the trial of a rancher charged with plotting the murder of rain forest activist Chico Mendes.

Hundreds of people planned a vigil at Mendes' grave to mark the end of the trial and to commemorate what would have been his 46th birthday.

Mendes was a leader of a rubber-tapper's movement opposed to the slash-and-burn destruction of the vast Amazon rain forest by ranchers and farmers.

"We will celebrate Chico's birthday in the morning, and the conviction of his killers by nightfall," said prosecution lawyer Marcio Tomaz Bastos.

On Friday, the defence chose not to call any of the four witnesses it had lined up to testify. The defence also waived cross-examination of two of the prosecution's main witnesses.

Defence lawyer Ruben Lopes Torres described the testimony presented by prosecution witnesses as "very tenuous" and lack-

ing in hard evidence.

In testimony Friday, a young ranchhand caused a sensation in the tiny Xapuri courthouse when he described how Da Silva threw a barbecue to celebrate Mendes' slaying.

Genecio Barbosa da Silva, 15, gave detailed testimony about the rancher.

Prosecutors say the boy has received death threats, and he has been living in hiding for nearly two years thousands of miles away.

Da Silva's son and co-defendant, Darci Alves Pereira, confessed to the shooting on the trial's opening day Wednesday.

Mendes, 46, was a union leader who over the years became a symbol of Brazil's poor and landless. His killing galvanised international efforts to save the rain forest.

He organised opposition among rubber tappers to ranchers who cleared chunks of the delicate Amazon rain forest for pasture. The jungle, once cleared, rapidly loses its topsoil and becomes barren of most

vegetation within a few years. The burning used to clear the forest is also a factor in global warming.

The small wooden courthouse was packed with officials and family members of the popular Mendes, the rights to whose story are being sought by film producers.

Prosecutors asked that the defendants be removed from the courtroom during Genecio's nearly five hours of testimony.

Standing before Judge Adair Longhini, Genecio told the five-man, two-woman jury of his life on Alves da Silva's Parana Ranch and what happened there on Dec. 22, 1988, the day Mendes was killed.

"I was lying in my bed. It was about 9 o'clock at night. I heard Darci coming, running," he said softly but firmly. "Darci was waiting for him on the front porch. Darci said: 'Mendes is dead.'"

Genecio hung his head. "I was too frightened. I stayed in my bed." Longhini asked him what the

rancher's reaction was.

"Darci answered: 'The cow is caught. Tomorrow we shall cook another for the barbecue,'" Genecio told the jurors. There were gasps in the courtroom.

The boy added, "Darci said he had taken one shot."

No one spoke of Mendes' murder at the barbecue next day, he said.

Longhini asked what the teenager knew about the Alves da Silva clan. Genecio, a distant relative, gave a grisly litany of killings: he claimed took place during the seven years he lived on the ranch.

Once, he said, two Bolivians came up and asked for a drink of water. As they were leaving, Darci and his brother Oloci drove by and shot them to take their bags. The bodies were left by the side of the road.

Torres, the defence counsel, discounted Genecio's testimony. He said the boy had been rehearsed to testify by "leftist political organisations."

The defence, however, chose not to cross-examine Genecio.

COLUMN

Thatcher has no regrets

LONDON (AP) — In her first interview since her ouster as prime minister, Margaret Thatcher says she believes she achieved much of her vision for Britain and would not change her policies if she had her time in power again. Mrs. Thatcher, 65, resigned on Nov. 28 after 11½ years in power when Conservative Party elders told her she could not win a party leadership election. "I have never been worried about being unpopular if I felt what I was doing was right," she said in the interview in the Dec. 17 issue of the House of Commons magazine House, copies of which were available Saturday. She added: "In general terms, I would not change any of the policies if I had my time again and no, no, I don't spend time regretting... 'I am just getting on with the next job in hand.' Mrs. Thatcher became a rank-and-file Tory legislator in the House of Commons on her resignation. She now leads a group of Tories in the Commons called the "no turning back group." They want the government led by her successor John Major to continue with her right-money, pro-capitalist policies. Her protégé Major, the former treasury chief in her cabinet, took over as prime minister the same day she left. Mrs. Thatcher said in the interview that it had been an uphill struggle to achieve what she wanted for Britain.

Another Monroe film 28 years after her death

LOS ANGELES (R) — Long-lost scenes of Marilyn Monroe, including one of her in the nude, have been rediscovered and made into a film that disputes the notion she was adrift and unable to work during her last months. The scenes are from Monroe's late movie effort, the uncompleted Something's Got to Give, and were stored until 1982 in a Kansas salt mine. They are incorporated in a new documentary film called Marilyn: Something's Got to Give. The never-shown-before footage is at odds with the widespread belief that Monroe spent the last months of her life in deep depression, said Henry Schipper, who produced, wrote and narrates the documentary film. "Not only did she look terrific, her scenes were powerful," he said. Monroe died from an overdose of pills at age 36 on Aug. 5, 1962. Her death was a suicide. About six hours of unedited footage of Something's Got to Give was stored in the Kansas mine and forgotten after her death. Schipper, looking for material for a feature film commemorating what would have been Monroe's 64th birthday, discovered the film when it was taken from the mine and stored with boxes of other films in Hollywood. In an interview, he said he spent six months preparing the documentary and using a painfully slow colour correcting process on the fading film.

Volunteers hide fire trucks

ROEBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Firetrucks aren't easiest things to hide, but Lorraine Wielgomaz has stashed away two of them to ensure they stay in the small outback town of Roebourne. The Western Australia state fire brigade board wants to move the trucks to Wickham, 12 kilometres away. But Mrs. Wielgomaz, captain of the local volunteer fire brigade, says that's too far to be safe. On Wednesday, she made a long stand and hid the fire engines. By Friday, she had gained widespread support from Roebourne's 2,000 residents. "All the people are behind me," she said. "They are coming up to me and telling me to keep going." Troubles began for Roebourne's 11-member volunteer fire brigade a year ago when they found properties adjoining their newly opened fire station were contaminated with asbestos. The fire brigade board was forced to close the station after a long-running dispute with the Roebourne Shire Council about cleaning up the sites. The council says it's not responsible because the contaminated land is privately owned. In a victory for Mrs. Wielgomaz, the fire board said the engines could stay in the town if a place can be found to house them. Now Mrs. Wielgomaz — who isn't prepared to give up the fire engines just yet — wants the Western Australia state government to come to the aid of Roebourne, 1,500 kilometres north of Perth.

Johnnie K. K.